

A HISTORY OF THE
MISSOURI RIVER



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A HISTORY
OF THE
MISSOURI RIVER

DISCOVERY OF THE RIVER BY THE JESUIT EXPLORERS; INDIAN
TRIBES ALONG THE RIVER; EARLY NAVIGATION AND
CRAFT USED; THE RISE AND FALL
OF STEAMBOATING.

BY
PHIL E. CHAPPELL

A HISTORY OF THE MISSOURI RIVER.

DISCOVERY OF THE RIVER BY THE JESUIT EXPLORERS—INDIAN TRIBES ALONG THE RIVER.

There is but little doubt that had the Missouri river been discovered before the Mississippi the name of the latter would have applied to both streams, and the Missouri would have been considered the main stream and the upper Mississippi the tributary. From the head of the Missouri, west of Yellowstone Park, to its mouth, as it meanders, is a distance of 2,546 miles; and to the Gulf of Mexico the Missouri-Mississippi has a length of 4,220 miles. The Missouri is longer than the entire Mississippi, and more than twice as long as that part of the latter stream above their confluence. It drains a watershed of 580,000 square miles, and its mean total annual discharge is estimated to be twenty cubic miles, or at a mean-rate of 94,000 cubic feet per second, which is more than twice the quantity of water discharged by the Upper Mississippi. It is by far the boldest, the most rapid and the most turbulent of the two streams, and its muddy water gives color to the Lower Mississippi river to the Gulf of Mexico. By every rule of nomenclature, the Missouri, being the main stream and the Upper Mississippi the tributary, the name of the former should have been given precedence, and the great river—the longest in the world—should have been called "Missouri" from the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of Mexico.

The earliest Spanish explorers evidently considered the Lower Mississippi but a continuation of the Missouri, for when Coronado came into Kansas, in 1541, on his expedition from Mexico, he was told of the Missouri by the Indians. He says: "The great river of the Holy Spirit (*Esperita Santo*), which De Soto discovered in the country of Florida, flows through this country. The sources were not visited by us, because, according to what the Indians say, it comes from a distant country in the mountains, from that part that sheds its waters onto the plains and comes out where De Soto navigated it. This is more than 300 leagues from where it enters the sea."

MARQUETTE AND JOLIET—1673.*

The Missouri river was the same ugly, muddy, tortuous, rapid stream when first seen by the early French explorers as it is today. When, in 1673, the Jesuit explorers, Marquette and Joliet—the first white men to come down the Mississippi—arrived at the mouth of the Missouri, they were astonished to see, flowing in from the west, a torrent of yellow, muddy water which rushed furiously athwart the clear blue current of the Mississippi, boiling and sweeping in its course logs, branches and uprooted trees. Marquette, in his journal, says: "I have seen nothing more frightful. A mass of large trees enter with branches—real floating islands. They come rushing from the mouth of the *Pek-i-tan-oni*, (the Indian name for Mis-

*It was more than a century after the discovery of the Mississippi river by the Spaniards before the French made any effort to explore it. In 1634 Nicolet, a *courier-de-bois*, left Quebec, and, ascending the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers, passed through the Straits of Mackinaw. Then coasting along Lake Michigan he reached Green Bay. From the Indians in that vicinity he heard of a great river toward the west, which flowed toward the south. Other explorers and Jesuit missionaries followed. Fathers Raymboult, and Jogues, in 1641, and Radison 1654. All of these adventurers brought back to Quebec wonderful accounts of a great river flowing over west of Lakes Michigan and Superior, but, into what sea it flowed was unknown to the Indians.

souri, meaning, ('Muddy Water,') so impetuously that we could not without great danger expose ourselves to pass across. The Pek-i-tan-oni is a considerable stream, which, coming from the northwest, enters the Mississippi."

Marquette was informed by the Indians that "by ascending this river for five or six days, one reaches a fine prairie, twenty or thirty leagues long. This must be crossed in a northwesterly direction, and it terminates at another small river on which one may embark. This second river flows toward the southwest for ten or fifteen leagues, after which it enters a lake, which flows toward the west, when it falls into the sea. I have hardly any doubt it is the Vermillion Sea."

This was an age of adventure and exploration among the people of the New World, and in 1672 Comte de Frontinac, the Governor of New France, determined to send an expedition to discover the "Great River," in which great interest had now become awakened. Louis Joliet, a man of education, excellent judgment and tried courage, was selected to undertake this hazardous enterprise. He was besides a rover, and had previously visited the Lake Superior region and spent several years in the Far West.

Joliet set out from Quebec in August, 1672, and in December arrived at Mackinaw, where he spent the winter in preparing for his expedition. During his stay there, he met a young Jesuit missionary—Father Marquette—a religious zealot, who had devoted his life to the spiritual welfare of the Indians. The missionary, who was somewhat of an adventurer himself, was easily persuaded to join Joliet, and on May 17th, 1673, having laid in a supply of corn and dried buffalo meat, they set out with five Indians in two canoes

on their perilous voyage. Having reached Green Bay, they ascended the Fox river to its head, where they made a portage of two and a half miles to the head-waters of the Wisconsin river. They floated down the last named river until on the 17th of June, the little fleet floated out upon the placid waters of the Mississippi.

Without meeting with any adventure worthy of notice, they arrived at the mouth of the Missouri about the first of July, 1673. It was during the June rise, and the description which Marquette gives of the turbulence of that stream, the color of its waters, and the great quantity of drift-wood and logs, seen floating on its surface, is a correct one, and is familiar to every one acquainted with the Missouri when on its annual rampage.

After paddling their canoes down as far as the Arkansas, the *voyageurs* became convinced that the Mississippi emptied into the Gulf of Mexico, and not into either the Atlantic Ocean or the Gulf of California, as had been surmised. They also learned from the natives that they were approaching a country where they were likely to encounter the Spaniards. They, therefore, very prudently, turned the bows of their canoes up stream and after a tedious voyage arrived at Lake Michigan by way of the Illinois river. Here the two comrades parted company, Marquette to remain with a tribe of Indians, then seated where the city of Chicago is now located, and Joliet to return to Quebec by the route he had come. In descending the St. Lawrence river, Joliet's canoe was upset, and all of his papers, including his maps and journal, were lost. Fortunately, Marquette's papers were preserved, and it is from his journal—a priceless manuscript,—that the above extracts, referring to the Missouri river, have been obtained.

It seems that Marquette had contemplated a voyage down the Mississippi for several years before he met Joliet, for in a letter written in 1670 to Father Francis Le Mercier, Superior of the Huron Mission, after referring to the Mississippi river, then only known by reports from the Indians, and to the different Illinois tribes, he says of the Missouri:

“Six or seven days’ journey below the Illinois is another river on which are prodigious natives, who use the wooden canoe. Of these I cannot write now, but will write next year.”

Marquette, having contracted a malarial fever in the south, died shortly after his return, and his remains, over which a handsome monument has been erected, repose at St. Ignace, near Mackinaw, Mich.

LA SALLE’S EXPEDITION—1682.

The second expedition down the Mississippi was conducted by Robert Cavalier de La Salle in 1682. For several years La Salle, who had been an enterprising trader at Quebec, Canada, had contemplated completing the expedition of Marquette and Joliet by following the Mississippi to its entrance into the Gulf of Mexico and planting there the “Lillies of France.” Following the usual course of travel, through the Straits of Mackinaw, and down the eastern shore of Lake Michigan, he arrived about the first of January, 1682, at the mouth of a river called by the Indians *Checagou* (Chicago). Dragging their canoes over the frozen river they made the portage to the head of the Illinois, down which they descended until the 6th of February found them at the mouth of that river, where they were detained for several days by ice in the river.

La Salle's company consisted of 31 Indians and 23 French-Canadians, and among the latter were several priests, some of whom have left accounts of this famous expedition.

FATHER ZENOBIUS MEMBRE'S ACCOUNT—1683.

This account was published in "Discoveries in the Mississippi Valley," (Le Clercq), 1683. He says:

"The floating ice kept us at this place (mouth of the Illinois river) till the 13th of February, (1682), when we set out and six leagues lower down, found the Osage river coming in from the west. It is full as large as the river Colbert, (Mississippi) into which it flows, troubling it so that from the mouth of the Osage the water is hardly drinkable. The Indians assure us that this river is formed by many others, and that they ascended it for ten or twelve days to a mountain, where it rises. That on the river are a great number of villages of many different nations, arible and prairie lands, and an abundance of cattle (buffalo) and beaver. Although this river is very large, the Colbert does not seem to be augmented by it, but it pours in so much mud that from its mouth the water of the united rivers is never clear thereafter to the Gulf, although seven other rivers of clear water are discharged into it."

Speaking in another place of the hostilities between the Iroquois and the Illinois Indians, Membre says: "There have been several engagements, with equal losses on both sides, and at last the greater part of the seventeen villages have retired beyond the river Colbert among the Osages, where a part of the Iroquois pursued them."

NOTE 1.—Father Membre calls the Missouri river the Osage, doubtless from the tribe of Indians whose villages were then lo-

cated on that stream near its confluence with the Missouri. So imperfect was the knowledge of the country at that time, as it had never been explored, and so little was known of the rivers of the West, even by the Indians, that there was some doubt in the minds of the Frenchmen whether the Missouri or the Osage was the principal stream.

NOTE 2.—As will be hereafter seen, Father Douay also refers to this war between the Iroquois and the tribes of the West. Did the Illinois Indians become absorbed by the Osages and lose their identity, or did they return east of the Mississippi? The facts will never be known; but that the Iroquois pursued these tribes west of the Mississippi is attested by the early French writers of that period. The subject will again be referred to.

NOTE 3.—It is difficult to understand how the Indians could have been so mistaken in the length of the Missouri river as to state that it was only ten or twelve days' journey to the mountains where it had its rise. And it is equally difficult to comprehend how anyone of intelligence, on viewing the river, could have been induced to believe that a stream of that size was only 150 to 200 miles long. As will be seen, not only in Father Membre's report, but in others, gross misrepresentations were made by the Indians of the country lying along the Missouri river. Whether these stories were told the Frenchmen for the purpose of deceiving them; through ignorance of the Indians of the facts; or whether they were misunderstood from the want of a competent interpreter; it is impossible to determine.

HENRI TONTY—1683.

Henri Tonty, who also accompanied La Salle on his famous expedition, in a book entitled, "Enterprise of M. de La Salle from 1673 to 1683," published at Quebec in November, 1684, gives the following account of the Missouri river:

"The Indians having finished three canoes, we descended the river (they were then at the mouth of the Illinois), and found at six

leagues,* on the right, a river which falls into the River Colbert, coming from the west and appearing as large and important as the great river. According to the reports of the *sauvages* it is called E-mis-sou-ri-tes. It is abundantly settled with people. There are also on this river villages of *sauvages* which make use of horses to go to war and to carry the meat of the buffalo, which they kill."

In "Henri Tonty's Memoirs," published in Paris in 1693, he makes the following reference to the Osage Indians in his return trip up the Mississippi river from the ill-fated expedition of La Salle. He says: "We arrived on the 17th of October, 1683, at an Illinois village at the mouth of their river, (the Illinois river). They had just come from fighting the Osages and had lost thirteen men, but they brought back 130 prisoners."

In Tonty's petition to the King of France, for recognition for his services, presented in 1693, he says: "The river of the Mis-sou-ri-tes comes from the west, and after traversing 300 leagues, arrives at a lake, which I believe is that of the Apaches. Villages of the Mis-rou-ri-tes, Agovoes (Iowas) and Osages are near one another, and situated on the prairies, 150 leagues from the mouth of the E-mis-sou-ri-tes river."

Again he says of his downward voyage: "We descended the river (Illinois) and six leagues below, on the right, came to a great river which comes from the west. It is said there are numerous nations on this river. We slept at the mouth and the next day went to the village of the Tamarou, six leagues off to the left."

NOTE 1.—Henri Tonty was the trusted friend and lieutenant of La Salle, and in point of energy, intelligence and personal courage was not behind his superior officer. In his youth he had lost

*A French league is two and three-fourths miles.

an arm in battle, and had supplied the missing member with one of iron. This peculiarity was observed by the Indians, by whom he was universally known as the "Iron Hand." He returned to the Illinois country in 1683, and after La Salle's unfortunate death during his second expedition in 1687, he again went down the Mississippi for the purpose of rescuing the remnant of the ill-fated colony. Of all the members of La Salle's famous expedition Tonty was the bravest, the most loyal and the most trustworthy.

NOTE 2.—Horses were in general use among the Indian tribes above the mouth of the Kaw, at an early day. The stock had been procured from the Spaniards in New Mexico.

NOTE 3.—The tribe of Indians referred to as the "Tamarou" are extinct. As their village was on the east side of the Mississippi river they were probably one of the numerous small tribes of the Illinois Indians, who were exterminated by the Iroquois.

NOTE 4.—The lake spoken of as that of the "Apache" probably referred to the Great Salt Lake, as there was no other in that direction. The reference is another illustration of the very imperfect knowledge of the country and its water courses possessed by the Indians. They had heard, no doubt, of a great lake toward the west, and supposed that the river had some connection with it.

NICHOLAS LA SALLE—1685.

In the narration of Nicholas La Salle, entitled, "The Voyage of Robert R. Cavalier La Salle to the Mouth of the Mississippi," written in 1685, he says: "The first day we camped six leagues on the right, (from the Illinois river), near the mouth of a river which falls on the Mississippi. It is called the river of the Missouries. This river comes from the northwest and is thickly settled, judging from what the savages say. The Panes are on this river very far from its mouth."

NOTE—The "Panes," "Panas," or Aparias as they were called when first known to the French, were afterward known as the "Pawnees." They may have been the same tribe met by De Soto in Southeast Missouri in 1541, called by him the "Quipanas." A

band of the same tribe was met by Du Tisne in 1719, called by him the "Panas." They were living on the Platte in 1724, when visited by Bourgmont, as will be seen hereafter, although he calls them the "Paducas." The two names, by most historians, are considered synonymous, although it is contended by some that the Paducas were a different tribe, and that they afterward went South and are now known as the "Comanches," a tribe living in the Indian Territory.

The "Pan'es," or "Pawnees," were at one time a numerous Western tribe, and roved all over the country from Red River, Texas, to the Platte. They were the same Indians encountered by Lieutenant Pike in Republic County, Kas., in Sept., 1806. In a report to the Secretary of War, made in 1829, their number was estimated at 12,000, and it was stated that there were four bands, the Pawnee Republics, the Pawnee Loups, the Grand Pawnees and the Pawnee Piques. All were then located on the Platte, and they claimed the country as far west as the Cheyennes. In 1836 their number was estimated, officially, by the government, at 12,500, but in a subsequent report, made to the Secretary of War in 1850, it was stated they were still on the Platte, but that their number had been reduced to 6,244.

This remarkable reduction was caused by that terrible scourge of the American Indian—the smallpox. The mortality was not confined to the Pawnees alone, but extended to all other tribes on the Missouri river, one-half of whom, it is said, died during the winter of 1837-1838.* The manner in which this terrible contagion was communicated to the Western tribes, hereafter described, seems

*Father De Smet, in his "Travels among the Rocky Mountain Indians," in 1840 refers to this terrible epidemic among the Minatarees, Poncas, Pawnees, Aricaras, Blackfeet, Flatheads, Crows, Grosventrees, Cheyennes, Mandans and other tribes. Of the Mandans he says: "This once numerous nation is now reduced to a few families, the only survivors of the smallpox scourge of 1837." Several of these tribes have become extinct.

providential, and one can almost see in it the hand of God; removing from the beautiful plains of Kansas and Nebraska an inferior race that they might be peopled by one superior.

In 1855 the Pawnees ceded their lands in Nebraska to the government, and in the '60s were removed, with other tribes, to the Indian Territory. The remnant of the tribe, now numbering less than 600, are on a reservation near Ponca Agency. They were the most dangerous of all the tribes that infested the Western plains from 1840 to 1860.

JOUTEL'S ACCOUNT—1687.

Henry Joutel was a young nephew of La Salle, and accompanied his uncle on his second expedition through Southern Louisiana. He was with him when he was cruelly murdered by one of his own men, and was one of the half-dozen survivors of the ill-fated expedition. After La Salle's death, he made his way up the Mississippi river to old Ft. St. Louis, on the Illinois river, and thence to Quebec and France.

The following is a reference to the Missouri river. He says: "We stopped on the 30th and 31st of August, (1687), and on the 1st of September passed by the mouth of a stream called the Missouri, whose water is always thick with mud and to which our Indians did not forget to offer sacrifice."

NOTE—At the mouth of the Missouri several years before, a party of Missourites, pursued by a party of Mataigames had been drowned, and afterwards these Indians, in passing, threw presents into the water in order to appease the Maniteau, whom they suppose to dwell there.

FATHER ANASTASIUS DOUAY—1687.

Among the priests in La Salles' party was Father Douay, a

most devout missionary, who, in his "Voyage of La Salle Through the Illinois Country," published in 1687, (after La Salle's death), says of the Missouri river :

"About six leagues below this, (the mouth of the Illinois), there is on the northwest, the famous river of the Mis-sou-ri-tes, or Osages, at least as large as the River Colbert, into which it empties. It is formed by a number of other known rivers, everywhere navigable and inhabited by many populous tribes, including the Osages, who have 17 villages on a river of their name, which empties into that of the Missourites, to which the maps have also given the name of the Osages. The Arkansas Indians were formerly stationed on the upper part of one of these rivers, but the Iroquois drove them out, by cruel wars, some years ago, so they say. Since then the Osages have taken possession of the country and established their villages on the river which bears their name."

NOTE—The Iroquois were a confederation of Indians occupying the western part of the state of New York. They were called the "Five Tribes" until they were joined by the Tuscaroras (who were driven out of North Carolina in 1712), after which they were known as the "Six Tribes." They were the most warlike of all the northern Indians, and were allies of the English, in their contest with the French for supremacy in the New World. They were continually at war with the Algonquin tribes, who were allies of the French (in Canada), and being well supplied with fire-arms, finally drove many of these tribes, including the Hurons, Wyandottes, Sacs and Foxes and others, through the Straits of Mackinaw to the western coast of Lake Michigan, where they were living when Marquette and Joliet passed through that section on their way down the Mississippi in 1763.

Having driven the Algonquin tribes out of the country the Iroquois turned on the Illinois tribes, who then occupied the country now included in the state of that name, and finally exterminated them. With their thirst for blood still unsatiated, it

will be seen by the statements of Fathers Douay and Membre that they even crossed the Mississippi river—a fact not generally known—and drove the Arkansas Indians from the Osage river. They were a cruel and blood-thirsty tribe, and deserved the fate which overtook them, for they are now entirely extinct.*

FATHER COSME—1699.

John Francis Cosme—a Jesuit missionary—left Canada in 1699 and descended the Mississippi river by way of Green Bay and the Wisconsin river. He has left the following account of the Missouri river:

“On the 6th of December, 1699, we embarked on the Mississippi river and after making about 600 leagues (1,650 miles), we found the river of the Ou-mis-sou-ri-tes, which comes from the west and which is so muddy that it spoils the water of the Mississippi, which down to this is clear. It is said that up this river are a great number of Indians.”

In another place he mentions meeting with the Arkansas|| Indians. “We told them,” he says, “we were going further down the river among their neighbors and friends, and that they would see us often. That it would be well to assemble all together, so as more easily to resist their enemies. They agreed to all of this and promised to try to make the Osages join them, who had left the river of the Ou-mis-sou-ri-es and were now on the upper waters of their own river.”

*A remnant of this tribe fled to the Rocky Mountains and were living with the Flatheads at the beginning of the Nineteenth century. (See Father De Smet.)

||The name “Arkansas” was variously spelled by different early explorers. Du Tisne calls it the “Arcansas,” and De Lisle the “Aconsa.” It was an Indian name, doubtless, with the final letters—“sas”—added, (as in Kansas and Petete-sas) by the French.

THE OSAGE INDIANS.

NOTE—As the foregoing pages contain the first reference to the Osage Indians, preserved in history, the statements of the different writers may be worth a comparison.

Father Membre, writing in 1683, says: "The Illinois tribes, consisting of the greater part of 17 villages, were driven across the Mississippi by the Iroquois who pursued them until they took refuge with the Osages." Father Douay (in 1687), says: "The Osages had 17 villages on the Osage river," and adds, "The Arkansas Indians who had formerly occupied that section, had been driven out by the Iroquois some years before by cruel wars, and the Osages had taken possession of the country." Henri Tonty (in 1693) states that "the Osages were then on a prairie country 150 leagues from the mouth of the Missouri." This would be about 400 miles, which is very near the distance by the river route, to where the prairies on the Osage set in, or between Osceola, in St. Clair county, and Pappinsville, in Bates county, Missouri. This is the locality in which, as will hereafter appear, Du Tisne found them thirty years afterward (1719) and where they remained until they removed to their present location in the Indian Territory about 1830. Father Cosme (1699) confirms the statement made by Douay, for he says: "The Osages have left the river of the Ou-mis-sou-ries and are now high up on the waters of their own river."

The map of De Lisle, published in 1703, which gives the location of all the Western tribes, lays down four villages of the Osages on their river. Three are high up on the river, apparently near Osceola, the other is located about where the town of

Warsaw stands. There are none laid down nearer the mouth of the river.

From this testimony left us by the early explorers, which must be reliable, as it comes from so many different sources, it appears that the Osage Indians at some time previous to 1682, dwelt near the mouth of Osage river, either on the banks of that stream or on the Missouri. There is no question that about that time the lower Missouri tribes were attacked by the wild men from the East—the cruel and bloodthirsty Iroquois—who, as they were armed with British muskets, and the Missouri tribes had only the primitive bow and arrow, almost annihilated them. By this cruel onslaught, and unequal contest, the Osages were driven higher up their river, and the Missouries to the Mouth of Grand river, a distance of 250 miles. The beautiful country near the mouth of the Missouri was forever abandoned by the redman, for it is a noteworthy fact, that as far as we have any information there was never after this raid a wigwam on the banks of the river below Grand river, unless, as there are indications, the Missouris stopped temporarily near Jefferson City, in their westward flight from the mouth of the river.

In many respects the Osages were the most remarkable of all the Western tribes. They are the oldest tribe of which we have any data; the name "Osage," the origin of which is unknown, has never varied in its spelling or been changed; they were the largest and most powerful tribe west of the Mississippi, excepting the Sioux; they have remained longer in the same locality, having been on the Osage river from time immemorial; they have been the

most peaceable of all the Western tribes and have given the government less trouble; they are the tallest and best proportioned Indians, physically, in America, few being less than 6 feet; and finally, they are today the wealthiest people—per capita—in the world.

Formerly the tribe was evidently a numerous one, for Douay says they occupied 17 villages. These villages were doubtless scattered all along the Osage river and each contained probably from 500 to 1,000 inhabitants. When first visited by the French (1719-1724) they were estimated at 12,000, but like all other aborgines, contact with civilization rapidly diminished their number, for in 1820 they had decreased one-half. The remnant of this powerful tribe, now numbering only 1,789 souls—one-half of whom are still blanket Indians—are now on their reservation in the Indian Territory.

About the middle of the 18th century the Osages were divided into three bands: the Great Osages, the Little Osages, and the Black Dog band. The former were seated near Pappinsville, in Bates county, Mo. The Little Osages—whose village will hereafter be described—were on Petite-sas Plains, in Saline county, Mo., and the Black Dog band was on the Verdigris river, in the Indian Territory. The “Black Dogs” were so called from a celebrated chief—a most remarkable man in stature, being nearly 7 feet tall.

While the Osages were a brave and warlike nation, and were frequently at war with the Pawnees, Iowas, Sacs and Foxes and other tribes, they always maintained peaceable relations with the whites. This was no doubt through the influence of the French traders, who from 1785 traded and lived with them and thus acquired a wonderful influence over them. Only on one occa-

sion did they take up arms against the whites, and that was during the Spanish regime. In 1794 a war party made an attack on St. Louis, then a village defended by a small Spanish garrison. As the village was fortified they dared not make an assault, but challenged the Spaniards to come out and fight in the open. This, of course, they declined to do, and they rode off without firing a gun.

The Osages, in their hunting excursions, roamed over all the vast territory from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains, and a good story is told by General Rozier, in his "History of the Mississippi valley," of an occurrence that took place at an early day near Ste. Genevieve, where General Rozier was born and where he lived and died:

"In 1797 a wedding party of young people, consisting of the bride and groom and a half dozen other couples, left their home on Big river to go to Ste. Genevieve to be married, there being no priest nearer. On arriving at Terre-Beau creek, near Farmington, they encountered a roving band of Osage Indians, who were out on a prairie horse-racing. The party was soon discovered by the Indians and followed. On being captured they were stripped of all their clothing, both men and women, and turned loose on the prairie as naked as they came into the world. No violence was offered, as the Indians considered it a good joke; but they kept their clothing and the young people were compelled to return home in this terrible plight. The wedding was postponed for a year, but the young couple finally married, and their descendants are yet living in St. Francois county."

The Osages claimed all of the country lying south of the Mis-

souri river and as far west as the Kaw. On November 10, 1808, a treaty was entered into by which they ceded to the government the territory lying east of a line running due south from Fort Osage (now Sibley) on the Missouri river, to the Arkansas river, and lying north of that stream to its confluence with the Mississippi. One provision of this treaty was that the Indians were to be removed from Bates county to Fort Osage. In 1809 they were so removed, but they did not remain long, for during the following winter they broke away and returned to their former village on the Osage. In 1820 they were granted a tract of land ten miles square, near Pappinsville, for a mission, and a mission called "Harmony Mission" was established. A church and school house were built and a large apple orchard set out. Nothing remains today to mark the site of this old village except the trunks of some gnarled apple trees, which have withstood the storms of eighty winters.

The Osages are one of the very few tribes which have no cause to complain of the treatment accorded them by the government. They have been well paid for their lands, and the different treaties made with them have been religiously observed. They receive an annuity of \$450,000, which is much larger than that received by any other tribe. Capitalized, on a 3 per cent basis, this annuity represents \$15,000,000, which apportioned among the tribe would be equal to the sum of \$8,384 for each man, woman and child.

But the time will soon come, under the present allotting system of the government, when the Osages will lose their lands—the fairest in the territory. It is the beginning of the end. Then, with

their tribal relations surrendered, and the protecting arm of the government withdrawn, their money will, under the influence of civilization, become a curse instead of a blessing.

BARON LA HOUTAN'S VOYAGE—1699.

From "Travels in North America from 1689 to 1700," published in London in 1703.

La Houtan left the mouth of the Missouri river on March 17th, 1699, and reached the first village of the Missouri tribe of Indians on the 18th, and the second the next day. Three leagues from there he reached the mouth of the Osage river. After a skirmish with the Indians at that place he re-embarked and started down stream. He landed his forces at night, and destroyed a village; re-embarked again, and arrived at the mouth of the river on the 25th. There he met some Arkansas Indians, and he says of them: "All that I learned from them was that the Missouries and Osages were numerous and mischievous; that their country was well watered with very great rivers; and, in a word, was entirely too good for them."

NOTE—As it is 140 miles from the mouth of the Missouri to the mouth of the Osage, the voyage could not have been made upstream in canoes in three days. The statement of the dates and distances made discredits the entire story, and it may be taken with a degree of allowance. If La Houtan actually came up the Missouri river he was the first white man to ascend that stream of whom there is any account.

PENNICANT'S ANNALS—1700.

The author says, in writing in 1700 of a voyage made from the copper mines of the Sioux country, on the upper Mississippi, down the river:

"Six leagues (from the Illinois) brought us to the mouth of the Ou-mis-sou-rie. The river has a very rapid current, especially in the spring of the year when the waters are high. In passing beyond the islands, which it inundates, it was up to the trees and uproots them and drags them along in its course, and it is from this cause that the Mississippi is filled with floating trees. It also assumes its color from this river, the source of which has never yet been discovered. I will not speak of the Indians dwelling on its banks, because we have not yet ascended it."

NOTE—The writer must have passed the mouth of the river during the annual June rise, as his description indicates that he saw it during a flood.

FATHER JAMES GROVIER—1700.

In 1700 James Grovier, a Jesuit priest, made a voyage down the Mississippi. He says: "The Arkansas river runs northwest, and by ascending it they go to reach the river of the Missouries, by making a portage."

NOTE—Grovier evidently meant to say that the river runs southeast. He was misinformed as to it being customary "to make a portage between the Arkansas and the Missouri rivers," as the distance was too great. He, no doubt, refers to the *Coureurs de bois*—those roving vagabonds—who even as early as 1700 had become numerous on the Missouri river and had doubtless invaded the Arkansas.

LE SEUR—1705.

Previous to 1705 all explorers of the Mississippi came down the river from Canada, but now the tide began to turn, and a stream came up the river from New Orleans. These two streams met at the mouth of the Missouri, and it was during this period,

1710 to 1720, that Vincennes, Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Fort Chartres were established.

In 1703 Chevalier Le Seur was sent by De Iberville, commandant of Louisiana, at New Orleans, on a mining expedition to the upper Mississippi. On returning down the river in 1705, he arrived at the mouth of the Missouri and is said to have ascended that stream as far as the mouth of the Kaw. There is some doubt whether Le Seur ever really came up the river, but there is no question that about this time the Missouri was first explored. In Le Seur's narrative the following allusion to the Missouri river, and the different tribes along that stream, is found. He says: "The Sioux generally keep to the prairies between the Mississippi and the river of the Missourites and live solely by hunting." At another place he says: "We ascertained that the Agovoes (Iowas) and Ottoe-ta-tees (Otoes) had gone to station themselves higher up on the side of the river of the Missourites, in the neighborhood of the Mahas (Omahas), a nation dwelling in those quarters." He makes the following reference to meeting some Canadians: "Having gone six leagues, I halted at the mouth of the Ou-missouri, where I met three Canadian travelers. I received from them a letter from Father Marest, of the Mission of the Immaculate Conception of the Illinois, informing me that the Longuettes had been defeated by the Sioux and Agavoes, and had joined with a party of the Mascoutans, Foxes and Matiganies to avenge themselves. Not upon the Sioux, for they fear them too much; possibly upon the Agovoes; or perhaps the Paducas (Pawnees); or more likely on the Osages; for these mistrust nothing and the others are upon their guard."

THE OTOES AND IOWAS.

NOTE 1.—The place to which Le Seur says the Otoes and Iowas went (about 1700) was the mouth of the Platte, not far from Council Bluffs, Iowa; for it was there that the Mahas were seated when first known to the French at the beginning of the 18th century. Their village was on the east side of the river, and it was from them that the modern city of Omaha took its name. De Lisle's map confirms the statement of Le Seur, for he locates the Otoes, whom he calls by the same name as Le Seur—the Ottoe-ta-toes—opposite the mouth of the Platte, and the Iowas, whom he calls the Aiou-reau-as, above the Platte, which he lays down as the Revier des Mahas. Both tribes were then on the east side of the Missouri, but the Otoes afterward removed their village up the Platte about 50 miles from the mouth. It is probable that about 1700 the Otoes were seated near the mouth of Grand river, and it was from that locality that they removed at the time Le Seur refers to. They were related to the Missouries, and Dr. Elliott Coues says occupied the same village, which was the one on Bowling Green prairie, below Grand river, as the Missouris had not yet removed to their upper village. It is said that both the Otoes and Iowas were offshoots from the Missouries. This is probably true, as it was to the Otoes—then on the Platte—that the remnant of the Missouris fled (about 1774) when they were driven from Petite-sas-Plains. The separation of the two tribes is said to have been caused by the abduction of a Missouri squaw by a chief of the Otoes.

The Otoes were a small tribe and did not number exceeding 500 souls, 120 of whom were warriors. They were always a peaceable tribe, probably on account of their numbers, and maintained friendly relations with the early fur traders and *voyaguers*. The remnant of the tribe—which includes the Missouries—now numbers less than 300. They are now on a reservation in the Indian Territory near Ponca Agency.

NOTE 2.—The village of the tribe mentioned by Le Seur as the "Matiganies" was on the Wabash river. The Mascoutans are located by De Lisle on the west side of Lake Michigan, near Fox river. The Longuerettes cannot be traced. All three of these

tribes are now extinct. The Foxes, also called "Renards," were at that time on Green Bay, Michigan, near the Mascoutans. They had formerly lived on Lake Huron, but about 1650 had been driven through the Straits of Mackinaw, with other Algonquin tribes, by the Iroquois. Having become reduced in number they now become united with the Saukees, or Sacs, and ever afterward the united tribes were known as the "Sacs and Foxes." About 1750 they removed to the Des Moines river, Iowa. They claimed the country north of the Missouri river, and on Nov. 3, 1804, the government, by treaty, purchased their title.

NOTE 3.—A good deal of latitude has always been admissible in Indian nomenclature. The name of the tribe which Le Seur calls "Agovoes" and De Lisle "Ai-ou-reau-as," was variously spelled by the French, "Agoway," "Agovoe," "Agowa," "Ioway," "Iowae" and finally "Iowa." They were a tribe of wanderers, and their migrations extended during different periods all up and down the Missouri river. Their village was probably somewhere in the territory now embraced in the state of Missouri at the time of their removal, as has been stated, to the vicinity of Council Bluffs; but it is nowhere shown that they were on the banks of the Missouri river. About 1750 they were seated on the Chariton river, in Missouri, near the Iowa line, having doubtless come back to Missouri—for which they cannot be blamed. They were living on a creek near Weston, Platte County, Mo., in 1836, when they ceded the country embraced in the Platte Purchase—which they claimed to own—to the government.

The Iowas were never a numerous tribe, although they were good fighters and made war on all the neighboring tribes, except the ancient Missouri's, from whom it is said they were an offshoot. In 1806 they numbered 1,600; in 1825 they had been reduced to 1,000; and in 1852 to 750 souls. The remnant of the tribe, now less than 300, are on a reservation in the Indian Territory, where they receive an annuity of \$14,450.

FATHER GABRIEL MAUDEST—1712.

Extract from a letter written at Kaskaskia, dated November 9th, 1712:

"Seven leagues below the mouth of the Illinois river is found a large river named Missouri, or more commonly called the Pek-i-tan-oni, that is to say 'Muddy Waters,' which empties into the Mississippi from the west side. It is extremely rapid and soils the beautiful waters of the Mississippi, which runs from there to the sea. It comes from the northwest, very near where the Spaniards have their mines in Mexico, and it is very convenient for the French to travel in the country." Again he says:

"We are but thirty leagues (83 miles) from the Missouri or Pek-i-tan-oni river. This is a large river which flows into the Mississippi and they pretend to say that it comes from a still greater distance than that river. It is upon the Missouri that the Spaniards have their best mines."

NOTE—It will be observed that even as late as 1712 the French had a very imperfect knowledge of the trans-Mississippi country, for this writer states that the Missouri river had its source in Mexico, for it was there the Spaniards had their mines.

EXPEDITIONS OF M. DU TISNE—1719.

In the spring of 1719 Claude Charles du Tisne went up the Missouri river in canoes to the village of the Missouries, near the mouth of Grand river. It was his purpose to go farther, but the Indians would not permit him to do so. He then returned down the river and made his way to the Illinois country, whence he soon thereafter crossed the Mississippi river and set out overland from the mouth of Saline river, near Ste. Genevieve. He traveled westward, through what was then an unexplored wilderness, being the first explorer of the trans-Mississippi territory.

The following letter, written by Du Tisne after his return from

his last expedition to De Bienville, the commandant at New Orleans, throws much light on the different Indian tribes then inhabiting the Missouri valley. It was written at the old French village of Kaskaskia, which was located near the east bank of the Mississippi, about fifty miles below the present city of St. Louis.

“Kaskaskia, Nov. 22, 1719.

“Sir:—

“You know that I have been obliged to leave the Missouries, as they did not wish me to go to the Pa-ni-ou-sas (Padoucas). Hence was compelled to return to the Illinois to offer to M. de Boisebriant (commander of the post) to make the journey across the country and be granted permission to do so. The journey was attended with much trouble, as my men fell sick on the way. My own health keeps well. I went to the Osages and was well received by them. They answered me satisfactorily in regard to themselves, but when I spoke of going to the Panis (Pawnees) they all opposed and would not assent to the reason I gave them. When I learned they did not intend to let me take my goods I had brought, I proposed to them to let me take three guns for myself and my interpreter, telling them, with decision, if they did not consent to this I would be very angry, and you indignant. They then consented. Knowing the character of these savages I did not tarry long, but set out at once, and in four days I reached the Panis, where I was badly received, owing to the fact that the Osages made them believe that our intention was to entrap them and make slaves of them. On that account they twice raised the tomahawk over my head, but on seeing my bravery, when they threatened me, brutal as they are, they consented to make an alliance and treated me

well. I traded them three guns, some powder, axes and a few knives for two horses and a mule; marked with a Spanish brand. I proposed to them to let me pass through to the Padoucas. To this they would not consent at all. Seeing their opposition, I questioned them in regard to the Spanish. They said the Spanish had formerly been to their village, but now the Padoucas prevented them. They traded me a silver cup, which they had obtained from the Spanish, and told me it would take more than a month to go to the Spanish settlements. It seems to me that we may succeed in effecting a treaty of peace between this tribe and the Padoucas, and thereby open a route to the Spanish (in Mexico). It could be done by giving them back their slaves and some presents. We might also attempt a passage to the Missouri river, going to the Pani-Mahas. (The Mahas, a tribe then seated near Council Bluffs). I offered M. de Boisebriant to go there myself, and if you desire it I am ready to execute it.

"I send this letter by a Manto chief, whom I met among the Osages. He has sold some slaves for me to the Natchitoches (a tribe of Indians on Red river). He has promised me to come to the Illinois and bring some horses. The Panis have also promised to come next spring. As the Osages would give me no guide to return to the Illinois, I was obliged to find my own way with the compass; having fourteen horses and one mule along with me. I had the misfortune to lose six horses, which is a loss of several hundred francs to me. I refer you to M. Boisebriant for the many difficulties I have passed through. Being one of the oldest officials in the command I hope you will do me the favor to

procure me a company. I shall try to meet your kindness by my faithfulness to the service.

"I am with respects.

"DU TISNE."

"To Gov. De Iberville, New Orleans."

The following is an extract from the journal of Du Tisne, translated from "Margry's Memoirs," by Mr. E. A. K. Killian, Secretary of the Quivira Historical Society:*

"From the village of Kaskaskia, on the Mississippi, to the mouth of the Missouri, is 32 leagues (75 miles). The Missouri is very turbid and full of obstacles from driftwood and extensive shallows and a strong current. It flows from the Missouries (the village of the Missouries), S. E., although it makes many times a complete circumvolution of the compass. It is well wooded with walnut, locust, sycamore and oak trees. Very fine soil and some rocky hills are seen. At intervals on the west side of the stream, two fine rivers flow into it. The first is the Blue river (the Gasconade) which is not great in importance. The second is the river of the Osages, whose village is 80 leagues (about 220 miles) above. A perogue can go 20 leagues (55 miles) above; S. W. from the village.

"The river of the Osages is 10 leagues (25 miles) above the mouth of Blue river, and 40 leagues (110 miles) above the mouth of the Missouri. In the vicinity of the Osages there are lead mines in abundance, and it is also believed there are silver mines.

*Mr. Killian is recognized as one of the most scholarly, painstaking and reliable historians of the Missouri valley. The writer is indebted to him for assistance in the preparation of this paper, and especially for notes obtained from the "Memoirs and Discoveries of Pierre Margry"; a collection of documents and journals pertaining to the French occupancy of North America.

"The prairie begins 10 leagues (27 miles) beyond their village."

"The Missouries are jealous because the French go to other nations. Their people stay only in the springtime at their village, and hunt the wild cattle (buffalo) in the fall and winter. One league south of them is a village of the Osages, which is 30 leagues (82 miles) from their great village on their river. (The writer is now referring to the village of the Little Osages, on the Missouri river, near the mouth of Grand river). One can go from the Missouries (near the mouth of Grand river) to the Pani-Mahas (Maha tribe, near Council Bluffs) and from there to the Padoucas (on the Platte) by the Missouri river."

"The great village of the Osages is situated on an elevation a league and a half (about 4 miles) from their river to the northwest. This village is composed of one hundred lodges and two hundred warriors. They stay in their village, like the Missouries, and pass the winter in chasing the buffalo, which are very abundant in these parts. Horses, which they steal from the Panas, can be bought of them, also deer skins and buffalo robes. They have some chiefs of bands but few have absolute authority. They are a well built people, but in general are treacherous and break their word easily. There is a lead mine 12 leagues from here, but they do not know what use to make thereof."

"From the Osages to the Panas is 40 leagues (110 miles) to the S. W., and the whole route is over prairies abounding in cattle. The land is fine and well watered. There are four rivers from the Osages to the Panas, which have to be crossed. The most considerable is the *Arcansas*, which has its source toward the

N. W. This river is 12 leagues (33) miles east of the Panis' village. It is situated on the bank of a creek, on a hill, surrounded by elevated prairies. One league to the N. W. is another village, as large as the first one. There are in these two villages three hundred horses, which they value so much that they do not like to part with them. Their nature is very brutal, but it would be easy to subdue them by making them presents of guns, of which they have only six among them all. There are other Panie villages to the west and northwest, but they are not known to us. According to their reports it is fifteen days' journey to the Padoucas (on the Platte) but they encounter them frequently in six days' journey. They have a cruel war now between them, so that they nearly eat one another up. When they go to war they harness their horses in a *cuirrass* of tanned leather. They are clever with the bow and arrow and also use a lance, which is like the end of a sword inserted in a handle of wood. Two days' journey to the West, or Southwest, is a salt mine. Every time they give food to a stranger the chief cuts the meat into pieces and puts them into the mouth of those they regale."

NOTE—On the 27th of September, 1719, Du Tisne planted a white flag in the middle of this village and took his departure in a northeasterly direction for the Missouri river. He arrived at that river, 6 leagues (about 17 miles) above the mouth of Grand river, at what is known today as Petite-sas-Plains. This location, one of the most historic in Missouri, has elsewhere been described. It was at that time the home of the unfortunate Missouries, and also a branch of the Osages known as the "Little Osages," or the "Little Tribe." The village of the latter is described by Du Tisne as having been one league, or about three miles, southwest from the former, which was absolutely correct. The locations of these old villages are still sufficiently well defined to be accurately

determined. When Lewis and Clark came up the river, in 1804, they were pointed out to them. They were well known then, as they had only been abandoned about thirty years. The Osage village, the larger of the two, was north of the town of Malta Bend, Mo., one mile and a quarter, and a quarter of a mile west. It was on a farm now owned by Mrs. A. G. Dicus. The other—that of the Missouries—was situated three and a half miles north of the town and the same distance east. It was on a tract of land now owned by Benjamin McRoberts.

The location of the village of the Great Osages, on the Osage river, when visited by Du Tisne, is not so easily determined. When Pike came up the Osage river, in 1806, they were seated at what was afterward known as "Old Harmony Mission," near Pappinsville, Bates County, Mo., on the river. The topography of the country, there, does not correspond with the description given by Du Tisne, for it is in a beautiful prairie country, which extends far westward. Du Tisne says that the prairies began 10 leagues, or about 27 miles, westward from the village which he visited. This would fix the location near Osceola, in St. Clair county, which was probably the true location of the village in 1719. The Osages, like all other tribes, were migratory, and may have moved their village higher up the river, or there may have been more than one village.*

It is stated by Du Tisne that he traveled four days in a southwesterly direction, in going from the Osage village to the Pawnees. He estimated the distance at 110 miles. He also says the Pawnee villages were 12 leagues, or 33 miles, west of the river he calls the "*Arcansas*." He doubtless meant the Neosho, a branch of the Arkansas. The location of these villages are unknown, but

*De Lisle's map, (1703) lays down four villages on the river.

from the distance traveled, the course, and the distance from the Neosho river, they were probably situated on Cabin creek, in what is now Cherokee County, Ind. Ty., near Vinita.

After Du Tisne had visited the Great Osages and the Pawnees, and had spent some time with the two tribes on the Missouri river, he crossed over to the north side and set out down that stream for the Illinois country, where he arrived about the first of November, 1719.

CHARLEVOIX—1721.

Extract from a letter written at Kaskaskia, October 20th, 1721. Charlevoix was the most intelligent and reliable of all the early French explorers and historians. He says:

“The Osages are a pretty numerous nation settled on the side of a river that bears their name and which enters into the Missouri about 40 leagues (110 miles) from its junction with the Mississippi. They send once or twice a year the *Calumet* among the Kaskaskias, and are actually here at present. I have also just now seen a Missouri woman, who told me her nation was the first we met when going up the Missouri river, from which she has the name we have given her, for want of knowing her true name. It is situated 80 leagues (220 miles) from the confluence of that river with the Mississippi. This woman has confirmed me, from what I have heard from the Sioux, that the Missouri river runs out of some naked mountains, very high up, beyond which there is a great river, which probably rises from there also, and which runs to the west. This testimony carries some weight, because of all the Indians we know none travels farther west than the Missouries.”

"I can make no doubt, in weighing the information we have had from many places, and which agrees pretty well together, that by endeavoring to penetrate to the source of the Missouri one would find wherewithal to make amends for the charge and the fatigue of such an enterprise."

Of the Missouri and the Mississippi he says:

"After we had gone five leagues on the Mississippi we arrived at the mouth of the Missouri, which runs north, northwest and southeast. I believe this is the finest confluence in the world. The two rivers are much the same breadth, each about half a league. The Missouri by far the most rapid and seems to enter the Mississippi like a conqueror, through which it carries its dark waters to the opposite shore without mixing them. Afterward it gives color to the Mississippi which it never loses again, but carries it quite down to the sea."

NOTE—It will be seen from this letter that the author had formed a pretty correct conception of the Missouri river, its course, and distances from one locality to another, although it had not even yet been explored, except by the French *voyageurs*, for any great distance. His reference to the Rocky Mountains applies well to the Black Hills; he had the proper conception of the Columbia river; and a correct knowledge of the course of the Missouri. He states that it was 110 miles to the mouth of the Osage from the mouth of the Missouri, while the distance is, in fact, 140 miles; and that it was 220 miles to the Missouri village near Grand river, when the correct distance, is, according to surveys of the United States engineers, 250 miles. So it will be seen that the Indian woman's estimate of the distance to her village was very nearly correct. The *calumet* referred to, or Indian pipe, was the solemn emblem of peace—the token of Indian brotherhood—and a formal declaration of entire forgiveness of past injury and a pledge of future good will and friendship. It was universally so regarded among all savage tribes.

BOURGMONT'S EXPEDITION—1724.

During the entire period of the French occupancy of the Missouri valley (1673-1763) there was a continuous conflict between Spain and France for supremacy in the country west of the Mississippi. In 1720 a Spanish caravan was sent from Santa Fe to the Missouri river to drive back the French, who even then were becoming numerous among the different tribes along that stream. The fate of that expedition will ever be enshrouded in mystery, for with it was connected one of the darkest tragedies known in the annals of the West. By a shrewd piece of strategy the invaders were thrown off their guard by the Indians and massacred, but by what tribe the deed was done, or where, was never known.

The arrival of this expedition from so great a distance alarmed the French, and M. Du Bourgmont was sent up the Missouri river with instructions to "build a fort somewhere above the mouth of the Osage." He came up in the spring of 1724, and, as this voyage is the first, excepting that of La Houtan's, of which any account has been preserved, it becomes of great interest.

The fort, called "Fort Orleans," was established opposite the village of the Missouris, near Grand river, the location of which has been described. Bourgmont then proceeded up the river—dividing his force, part going up the river in canoes and the remainder overland. They arrived at the Kansas village—located on the Missouri river above the mouth of the Kaw, where the town of Doniphan, Kas., is now situated,* and there held a powwow with the Indians, the following tribes being represented, viz: the Iowas,

*Mr. Geo. J. Remsburo, an acknowledged authority on Western history, has located this old village at Doniphan, Kansas.

Missouris, Kansans, Otoes and Osages. After a general debauch, continuing several days, the motley crew, consisting of French, half-breed *coureurs-de-bois*, and Indians, among the latter being 68 Osages and 109 Missouris, who had followed Bourgmont from the mouth of Grand river, proceeded to the Platte, where they spent some time in visiting the Pawnees, called by Bourgmont the "Paducas."

The following extract, taken from Bourgmont's journal, will prove interesting. He says:

"Fort Orleans, Sunday, June 25th, 1724. The detachment which is to go by water set out for the *Canzas* and the *Paducas*. It is commanded by M. de Saint Ange, ensign at Fort Orleans. He has with him one sergeant, two corporals, eleven privates, five Canadian *voyageurs* and two Indian servants."

Saturday, July 8th.

"Saint Ange sent an Indian runner to the *Canzas* village to report to me that the *perogues* and canoes could not proceed on account of several of the Frenchmen having fever, and requests that five additional men be sent to help tow the boats."

Sunday, July 9th.

"The five men were sent off down the river."

Sunday, July 16th.

"St. Ange arrived (at the *Canzas* village) at 2:00 p. m. with the boats. Hindered by sickness and low stage of the water."

THE MISSOURIES.

NOTE 1.—The history of the Missouri tribe, "the Ou-missou-ri-tes," as they were called by the early French explorers, afterwards known as the "Ancient Missouries," is most pathetic, and

illustrates most forcibly the sad fate that befell many tribes of the aborigines. There is no doubt that they were seated near the mouth of the Missouri river when first known to the French (1673-1682), and that they were then a numerous tribe. As has been seen, they were driven higher up the river about that time by the invasion of the Iroquois, and doubtless many of them were killed. This merciless slaughter, with the ravages of that terrible scourge of the American Indian—the smallpox—must have greatly reduced their number, for they were never a numerous people after the close of the Seventeenth century, when the *coureurs de bois* first began to visit them.

On De Lisle's map (1703) their villages are located on the Missouri river a short distance above the Osage, and there were evidences when that section was first settled (1818) of an Indian village and burial ground on the north side of the river, directly opposite Jefferson City, and another at the mouth of Moniteau creek, just above. The writer visited these localities many years ago—when a boy—and saw, in exhumed skulls and bones, and in broken pieces of pottery, arrow heads and other relics, the evidences of which he speaks.

Henri Tonty (writing in 1699) says the Missouries were 150 league (400 miles) up the river, but he was evidently misinformed, as to the distance, for this would locate them nearly at the mouth of the Kaw. The distances given by the Jesuit chroniclers are not always to be relied on, as they received their information solely from the Indians, who were frequently, no doubt, misunderstood, from the want of an interpreter.

About 1700 the Missouries came still further up the river, and this time located on Bowling Green prairie, on the north side of the river, about ten miles below the mouth of Grand river. The location of this old village was pointed out to Lewis and Clark

when they came up the river in 1804 by their half-breed guides, although they state that not a vestige of it then remained. They also say that the Missouries, several years before, had been attacked at this village by the Sacs and Foxes, and having lost 200 of their best warriors, the remnant of the tribe, consisting of only 30 families, fled across the river and took refuge with the Little Osages, whose village, as has been seen in the history of that tribe, was on Pe-tite-sas Plains, about 18 miles above Grand river.* There can be no question that both tribes were at this place in 1719 when visited by Du Tisne, and in 1724 when visited by Bourgmont, for the locations of their villages are well known today, and are just where they were described by Du Tisne.

There has always been a controversy among historians as to the exact location of old Fort Orleans, a matter of some interest, as it was the first fort established west of the Mississippi. All agree that it was on an island in the Missouri river opposite the village of the Missouris; which has long since disappeared. The journal of Du Tisne seems to settle the question. He was at this village in 1719—the one above Grand river—for it was near the Osage village. Bourgmont did not come up the river until 1724, hence must have built the fort at the upper village above Grand river.

About 1774 both the Osage and Missourie villages were again attacked by their relentless enemies, and both tribes were almost annihilated. Lewis and Clark state that when they came up both

*Du Pratz, in his "*Histoire de la Louisiane*," (1755) refers to this battle and says: "The Missouris have been engaged in a war with the Sacs and Foxes and lost 200 warriors."

villages—which they locate on Petite-sas-Plains—had been abandoned about 30 years, which would fix the date of the exodus about the above year (1774). There is every reason to believe that the final battle fought here resulted in a massacre and a rout and probably in the burning of the wigwams. The number of human skeletons found near the surface of the ground, which have been turned up by the plow-share, indicates that the bodies did not receive the sacred sepulcher which even savages accorded their dead. That the lodges were burned seems evident from the condition of the relics found, such as gun-barrels, kettles, etc., all of which bear, in their bent and broken condition, evidence of having been subjected to fire.

After this battle the few Osages left fled to their kindred—the Great Osages—on the Osage river, and established a village of their own a few miles below Pappinsville, at a place called Ballstown. The remnant of the poor Missouries—now few and without a home—again fled up the river and this time sought refuge with their kindred, the Otoes, or the “Ottoe-ta-toes,” as Le Seur called them, whose village was not far above Council Bluffs. There they became merged into that tribe and forever lost their identity as a distinct nation.

While the story of the unfortunate Missouries is a sad one, and they have long since become extinct, they have left behind them in the grand old river, on whose banks they dwelt, a name which will perpetuate their memory as long as its waters flow to the Gulf.

THE KANSAN INDIANS.

NOTE 2.—The Kansan Indians have been variously known as “Canse,” “Kanzans,” the “Kansa,” “Kanzas,” “Okanas,” “Canzas,” (as Bourgmont called them) and the “Kaws.” When visited by Bourgmont, which was the first known definitely of them, they occupied the territory between the Missouri river and the Kaw, and roved westward *ad libitum*. They were the most degraded of all the Western tribes, and were in fact a band of robbers and thieves. Their principal occupation was robbing the early fur-traders, and for that purpose they lay in wait, about Cow island, and other localities, above the mouth of the Kaw, and robbed and murdered the unwary Frenchmen as they came up the river in their canoes. To such an extent was this piracy carried, and so dangerous did it become to pass this locality, that during a period about 1750 the traders went up Grand river to its headwaters and from there made a portage across to the Missouri river, coming in above St. Joseph.

On December 30th, 1825, a treaty was made with the Kansan Indians by which they exchanged their lands near the mouth of the Kaw for a strip thirty miles wide along that river, beginning 60 miles from the mouth. Their principal village, in 1840, was near Topeka, but about 1850 they removed to Council Grove, Kansas. During the '60s they were removed, with other tribes, to the Indian Territory. In 1825 their number was estimated at 1,700, and in 1835 at 1,200. The remnant of the tribe, numbering about 200, is now on a reservation near the Osage Agency. All attempts to civilize them have proved futile, and they are today among the lowest and most degraded of the race.

DANIEL COXE—1726.

“A Description of the English Province of *Carolana*, by the Spanish called *Florida* and by the French *La Louisian*,” printed in London in 1726.

Coxe was an Englishman and the owner of a grant of land extending from the coast of South Carolina to the Mississippi river or "from sea to sea"; issued by Charles I. of England. He owned the first ship to enter the mouth of the Mississippi (1699) and made a futile effort to establish a colony on that river. In describing the Missouri river and the country through which it runs, he says:

"The great 'Yellow River' to the west, is so named because it is yellow and so muddy that though the *Mes-che-ce-be* (Mississippi) is very clear, where they meet, and so many rivers of chrysaline waters below mix with the *Mes-che-ce-be*, yet it discolours them all even unto the sea. When you are up that river 60 or 70 leagues you meet with two branches, the lesser, though large, proceeds from the south and is called the River of the Osages, from a numerous people who have 16 or 18 villages seated thereon, especially near its mixing with the Yellow river. The other, which is the main branch, comes from the west. The Yellow is also called the river of the Missourites, from a great nation inhabiting many towns near its junction with the river of the Osages."

"It will be one great convenience to this country *if it ever becomes settled*, that there is an easy communication to the South Sea, which lies between America and China, by the north branch of the great Yellow river, by the natives called the River of the Missourites, which has a course of 500 miles navigable to its head, or springs, and which proceeds from a ridge of hills, passable by a horse, foot or wagon, in less than half a day, somewhat north of Mexico. On the other side are rivers which run into a great

lake that empties itself by another great navigable river into the South Sea."

NOTE 1.—Coxe was evidently impressed with the same erroneous belief that was entertained by most of the early explorers, that there was a waterway somewhere through the Western Hemisphere by which the South Sea and China might be reached. Marquette possessed the same idea when he first discovered the Missouri, for he said: "I hope by its means to make the discovery of the Vermillion, or California Sea." La Salle had the same impression, for when he discovered that the Mississippi discharged itself into the Gulf of Mexico, "he conceived the hope of reaching the South Sea by the Missouri river." Indeed, Frontenac, when he sent Joliet down the Mississippi, wrote to his home government, in France, "that he would in all probably prove once for all that the great river flowed into the Gulf of California."

NOTE 2.—The description given by the writer of the Rocky Mountains is amusing, and shows how little was known, even as late as 1726, of the geography of the Western country, although both Coxe and Charlevoix must have had some conception of Great Salt Lake and the Columbia river.

NOTE 3.—It will be observed that the early French explorers made repeated efforts to give names to the two great watercourses of the West, which fortunately failed, else they would not today bear the beautiful and poetic Indian names which they do. Marquette—the religious zealot—called the Mississippi the "Conception," La Salle called it the "River Colbert," after the Minister of Marines of France. It was called by Le Page Du Pratz the "River St. Louis," after the French king, and it remained for the Englishman, Daniel Coxe, to restore the musical Indian name "Mes-che-ce-be," by which it was known by the Indians on Lake Superior as early as 1670. The name is a Chippewa word, and means in the dialect of the tribe "The Father of Running Waters." It was an easy transition to the more modern name "Mississippi."

The Missouri river, it will be remembered, was called by Marquette, the "Pek-i-tan-oni," and it is so laid down on many of the early maps. It was an Indian name meaning "Muddy Water." It was also called the "Osage River," being doubtless, confounded

with that stream. Coxe calls it the "Yellow river," although he also refers to it by the name by which it was generally known—the "River of the Missourites." The latter name was very appropriately given it by La Salle, from the Indian tribe which at that time dwelt near its mouth. This name, as has been seen, was variously spelled by the early French "E-mis-sou-ri-tes," "Ou-mis-sou-ri-tes" and "Mis-sou-ri-tes." In the course of time, through the jargon of the French *voyageurs*, it passed through many changes, until it finally settled down to the present form—Missouri. The word simply meant, in the Indian dialect, and as applied to the stream, "Dwellers at the mouth of the River," and there appears to be no foundation for the general belief that the name was characteristic of the river and meant "Muddy Water."

FATHER LOUIS VIVIER—1750.

Excerpt from a letter written at Kaskaskia, Nov. 17th, 1750:

"Before its junction with the Missouri the Mississippi is not considerable. It has very little current, while, on the contrary, the Missouri is larger, deeper and more rapid, and takes its source from a greater distance. Several large rivers flow into the Mississippi, but it seems the Missouri also furnishes more water than all the others together. Here is the proof: The water of the greater part, I might say of all the rivers that the Mississippi receives, is but moderately good, that of some positively unwholesome. That of the Mississippi, even, before its alliance with the Missouri, is not of the best. On the contrary, the water of the Missouri *is the best in the world*. Now that the Mississippi, after its junction with the Missouri, becomes excellent, therefore the water of the Missouri must be dominant."

NOTE—The statement of Father Vivier, as to the purity of the waters of the Missouri river, and of the Mississippi, after their confluence, is not in accord with the prevailing opinion, but is nevertheless true. While muddy, from the sand held in solution, the very presence of this sand serves to purify it and render it wholesome. And when clarified, by settling, it is true that there is “no better water in the world.”

Several years ago a test was made in Paris, France, of waters taken from streams in different parts of the world, to ascertain which would continue pure and wholesome for the longest period of time; it being important that this fact should be ascertained for the benefit of ships sailing on long voyages at sea. After a thorough test, the water taken from the lower Mississippi, which assumes its character from the Missouri, was pronounced the best.

LE PAGE DU PRATZ—1756.

Excerpt from his “History of Louisiana,” published with a map of the country, in 1756:

“The Missouri takes its source 800 leagues, as well as can be ascertained, from the place where it empties into the St. Louis (Mississippi). Its waters are muddy, troubled and charged with *niter*, and it is because of these waters that the river St. Louis is so muddy to the sea. The reason of the color is that the latter takes its course over sand and firm ground, while the former flows over fertile ground where one sees but few rocks; and although the Missouri comes from a mountain, towards New Mexico, we must remember that all the country through which it passes is for the most part rich soil.

“The river not having been ascended by the French *but for a short distance, about 300 leagues, at most*, the branches which

empty into it are only known to the natives. It makes no difference what name they have at present, being in a country little frequented. The best known of them is the Osage, which takes its name from a nation which dwells on its banks. It empties into the Missouri river near its mouth. The largest known river, which falls into the Missouri, is the *Canzes*. It has nearly 200 leagues course through a beautiful country. From what I have been able to learn of the course of the Missouri it flows from its source to the *Canzes* river from west to east; there it makes a great elbow which ends in the neighborhood of the Missouries (village of the Missouries) when it retakes its course toward the southeast. Then it loses its name and waters in the River St. Louis.

“The waters of this river of the Missouries are always thick and muddy, and it seems that its source is not far from the place, where on the map of De Lisle, they make Fort Dauphin on the Sea of the West.”

NOTE 1.—Du Pratz lived in New Orleans, then the capital of all Louisiana, and was never up the Missouri river. Nevertheless, the description he gives of the river, distances, etc.—the information of which he had doubtless obtained from the voyageurs—was approximately correct. The map which he published at the time was a valuable contribution to the geographical knowledge of the West, and on it are laid down the village of the Missouries and old Fort Orleans, at the exact spot where Charlevoix had located them 35 years before.

NOTE 2.—The author says the Missouri had not then been ascended for more than 300 leagues, or about 825 miles. He probably meant the mouth of the Platte, for that was as high as the fur-traders were accustomed to go in that day, and was considered the dividing line between the upper and lower river. The distance is about 650 miles, or 175 miles less than Du Pratz estimated it. He estimates the length of the entire river at 800

leagues or 2,200 miles. The actual distance from its head—the mouth of the Gallatin river—to its mouth is 2546 miles.

NOTE 3.—The courses of the river, as stated, are correct. The “elbows” at the mouth of the Kaw and at the mouth of Grand river—the latter being “in the neighborhood of the Missouries” are correctly described.

NOTE 4.—The author expresses the belief that the river “has its source not far from where, on the map of De Lisle, they make (lay down) Fort Dauphin on the Sea of the West.” He probably did not know how close he came to guessing the truth. In 1738 Le Sieur De Verendrye—an employe of the Hudson Bay company—came down from the British possessions to the Missouri river which he crossed at the Mandan village, near where Bismarck, N. D., is now located. After going westward and spending a year or two with the Rocky Mountain Indians, he returned to the Assiniboine country, and in 1740, established on Lake Manitoba a post, which he called “Fort Dauphin.” This fort, which was not more than 250 miles from the nearest point on the Missouri river, was the one referred to, and the “Sea of the West” was Lake Manitoba.

To Verendrye belongs the honor of having been the first white man to visit the upper Missouri country, and to give to the world the first information of that vast unexplored domain. The result of his exploration was far-reaching, for it is probable that the journal of his travels—published after his return to Canada—was the awakening cause which impressed on Mr. Jefferson the importance of the acquisition of that valuable territory by the United States.

The tenacity with which Mr. Jefferson clung to that idea, and the persistency with which he followed it up, are matters of history. He induced John Ledyard, in 1785, to “seek the West by way of the East,” and pointed out to him the road to the Pacific coast through Russia and Behring Strait. Again, in 1792, he made an effort to secure by private subscription a sufficient sum

of money to equip and send an expedition across the Rocky Mountains by way of the Missouri river. Both of these attempts failed; but when he became President of the United States he did not lose sight of his favorite project, but hastened, with a far-seeing wisdom, to consummate with Napoleon the fortunate land deal known as the "Louisiana Purchase." This masterly stroke of statesmanship fixed the destiny of this country, and resulted in placing it among the first powers of the world.

PHILIP PITMAN—1770.

In a book entitled "The Present State of European Settlements on the Mississippi," published by Philip Pitman, in 1770, it is said:

"The source of the Missouri river is unknown. The French traders go betwixt three hundred and four hundred leagues up to traffic with the Indians, who inhabit near its banks. From its confluence with the Mississippi to its source is supposed to be eight hundred leagues."

NOTE—A hundred years had passed since Marquette's discovery of the Missouri river and yet its source was unknown. The French *voyageurs* had ascended the river as high up as the mouth of the Platte, or perhaps to the Mandan village, but beyond, nothing was known. The time had now come, however, when the searchlight of a new race—the Anglo-Saxon—was to be turned on the dark recesses of the Rocky Mountains and the Indian Myths of the "South Sea," the "Vermillion Sea," the "Southeast Passage to China," the "Great Lakes of the West," the "Spanish Mines," and the "Ridge of Hills, passable by horse, foot or wagon in half a day," were all to be exploded.

In 1792 that intrepid explorer, Sir Alexander MacKenzie, the first to cross the continent—blazed a path over the Rocky Mountains, floated down Fraser river to the Pacific Ocean, and gave

to the world the first intimation of the magnitude and grandeur of the Northwest. In 1804 Lewis and Clark, who followed MacKenzie, traced the great river beyond Yellowstone Park and found the spring from which it flows—the fountain head—on the great divide. From these discoveries a correct map of the country was produced: its topography and geographical dimensions were made known; and its wonderful possibilities, as a home for civilized man, foretold. These reports showed that the Missouri river, including the lower Mississippi, was the longest river in the world; that the Missouri valley was the most fertile agricultural region in the world; that it was the largest body of tillable land in the world; and finally, that the Louisiana Purchase was the most profitable real estate investment that had ever been made in the world.

The purchase of Louisiana was the realization of the cherished dream of Thomas Jefferson. With the far-seeing wisdom for which he was distinguished, he probably foresaw more clearly than any man of his day the great possibilities that would result to his country from the acquisition of this immense and valuable domain. In his message to Congress in October, 1803, urging the speedy ratification of the treaty with France, he said: "The fertility of the country; its climate and extent; promise, in due season, important aids to our treasury, ample provision for our posterity, and a widespread for the blessings of freedom and equal laws."

EARLY NAVIGATION ON THE MISSOURI RIVER.*

It is not known positively in what year the first white man entered the Missouri river, but it was probably between 1700 and 1705. The account given by La Houtan of his voyage in 1699, is not worthy of credence, and it is even doubtful if Le Seur came up in 1705. There can be no question, however, that about this time the lower part of the river, as far up as the mouth of the Kaw, was first explored by the French.

In the "Gazatteer of the State of Missouri," published in St. Louis, in 1837, the following reference is made to the early navigation of the Missouri river:

"The French then, in 1705, ascended the Missouri as far as the Kansas river, the point where the western boundary line of Missouri now strikes the river. The Indians there cheerfully engaged in trade with them, and all the tribes on the Missouri, with the exception of the Blackfeet and Arikaras, have since generally continued on friendly terms with the whites. It should be observed that the French traders have always been more fortunate in their intercourse with the Indians than those of other nations."

In 1705 Nicholas de La Salle proposed an expedition of one hundred men to explore the mysterious river, in which great in-

*Among the different authorities which have been consulted in the preparation of this paper on the navigation of the Missouri river, are "Lloyd's Steamboat Directory," "Chittenden's Missouri River Navigation" and "Gould's Fifty Years on the Mississippi."

terest had now become awakened; but no account has been found of the result of this enterprise. About the same time one Hubert—a French Canadian, who had doubtless been up the river—laid before the marines of Canada a proposition to explore the river to its source. He said: “Not only may we find the mines worked by the Spaniards, but the river flowing to the west.” He advised the use of wooden canoes.

THE COURIERS-DE-BOIS.

As early as 1700 it was reported that there were not less than one hundred *Couriers-de-bois*, or trappers, domiciled among the different tribes along the Missouri river. The *Courier-de-bois* was a type of the earliest pioneer, now long since extinct. He was a French-Canadian, probably a half-breed, and in his habits was blended the innocent simplicity of the fun-loving Frenchman and the wild traits and woodcraft of the Indian. Born in the woods, he was accustomed from childhood to the hardships and exposure of a wild life in the wilderness, and was a skillful hunter and trapper. His free-and-easy going manners, peaceable disposition and vivacity, qualified him for association with the Indian, and he adopted his customs, married into the tribe, and himself became a savage.

It was this roving vagabond who, as he wandered up and down the Missouri river, gave the poetic and musical French names to its tributaries and prominent localities which they bear to this day; such as the Marias-Des-Cygnés (River of the Swans), Creve-Cœur (Broken Heart), Cote-sans-des-sein (A hill without a Cause), Petite-sas (Little Tribe), Roche-Perce (Split Rock), now called

Rocheport; Bonne-Femme (Good Woman), now called "Bone-fam"; Terre-Beau (Beautiful Earth) now called "Tabo"; Aux Vasse (Blue Mud), Gasconade (Turbulent), La Mine (The Mine), Pomme-de-Terre (Fruit of the Earth), now called Pom-de-Tar; Moreau (Black) and Niangué (Crooked).

But while the *Courreur-de-bois*, the feather-bedecked wanderer, has forever disappeared, he will not be forgotten, for

"He has left his names behind him,
Adding rich barbaric grace
To the mountains, to the rivers,
To the fertile meadow-place;
Relics of the ancient hunter
Of a past and vanished race."

It is true that many of the most beautiful of these early French names have become so corrupted, in their anglicization, as to have lost all semblance to their original meaning. When Lewis and Clark came up the river a hunter killed a bear at the mouth of the creek, not far above St. Charles. Very naturally they called the creek "Bear Creek." The French hunter called the place "L'Our's Creek,"—"L'Our's" being the French name for bear. Soon thereafter the long-haired Tennessean came along, and not knowing the meaning of "L' Oou'r" called it "Loose Creek," and it is so laid down on the maps today. Another instance of the corruption of a beautiful French name occurs just below the Osage. An early French hunter, in passing through the country, gave the name "Bois-Brule" to a certain creek. The words mean "Burnt Woods," and it was probably owing to the fact that the woods had recently been burned over that the name was applied. The creek is now called the "Bob Ruly."

IMPORTANCE OF THE RIVER IN THE PAST.

During the entire Eighteenth century the navigation of the Missouri river was confined to the wooden canoe, and its commerce—such as it was—was limited to the primitive fur-trade. The trader, or trapper, ascended the river singly or in pairs, and after spending the winter with some favorite tribe returned in the spring with his *perogue* well loaded with furs, which he disposed of in St. Louis. Then, after a protracted debauch, he went to the priest, was granted absolution from his sins, and returned to the wilderness.*

It is not probable that these early *voyageurs* ascended the river higher than the Platte, for neither De la Verendrye, who came over from the Hudson Bay Company's posts, in 1738, to the Missouri river at the Mandan village, where Bismarck is now located, Mallett Brothers, who ascended the Platte in 1739, nor Alexander Henry, who followed them, mention having met them. It is very certain, however, that at the time St. Louis was founded (1764) the fur trade on the Missouri had attracted the attention of the French, and the lower part of the river, at least, must have been well known. Indeed, the charter granted Laclede Liguist and his associates, by the Governor of Louisiana, gave them the exclusive right to trade on the Missouri river. But little is known, however, of the navigation of the river during the Eighteenth century. The French *voyageur* was an illiterate half-savage creature and could neither read nor write; hence no record of his early voyages was preserved. Doubtless he continued to paddle his canoe

*Lewis and Clark met a number of these half-savage adventurers, coming down stream in their canoes, laden with furs, as they ascended the river in the spring of 1804.

up and down the river, gradually increasing his trade, extending his voyages higher up the river and becoming better acquainted with its tortuous channel.

To Manuel Lisa,* a Spaniard of St. Louis, is generally accorded the honor of being the father of navigation on the Missouri river, although tradition divides that honor with one Gregoire Sarpy, who is said to have been the first to introduce the keel-boat. As early as 1785 Lisa and Auguste Choteau became associated together in trading up the Osage river with the Osage Indians, who were then seated on that river in what is now Bates County, Missouri. They transported their merchandise up the Missouri in *perogues* to the mouth of the Osage and then up that stream to the Indian villages. The Choteaus continued to trade with the Osages for many years and gained a wonderful influence over the tribe. Indeed, they intermarried with them, and there are descendants of this well known family—bearing the family name—now living with the tribe in the Indian Territory after a period of 120 years. It was not unusual at an early day for traders to marry Indian wives, and there is more than one wealthy and aristocratic family in St. Louis who have blood-relations living in the Territory who wear the blanket.

For a hundred years the history of the Missouri river has been the history of the country through which it flows, and its influence on the development of the country cannot now be under-

*Manuel Lisa was not only the father of navigation on the Missouri river, but the pioneer fur-trader on that stream. As early as 1800 he was granted the exclusive right, by the Spanish Government, to trade with the Osage Indians. He made thirteen trips to the Rocky Mountains in keel-boats, traveling not less than 26,000 miles, or a greater distance than around the earth. He died in 1820, and his ashes, over which a monument was erected, rest in old Bellefontain Cemetery, in St. Louis.

stood. On its dark bosom the Indian paddled his canoe for centuries before the advent of the white man.* Then came the French *voyageur* with his *perogue*, his *batteau*, his keel-boat and his mackinaw boat, without which the fur trade—the principal commerce in that day—could not have attained the proportions it did attain. At last came the steamboat, the most wonderful invention of the Nineteenth century.

For half a century the Missouri river was the great thoroughfare from the East to the West, and on its bosom floated the travel and commerce of the trans-Mississippi section. No one can now appreciate its importance in the past. Capitals of states were located on its banks that they might be accessible. Settlements were made with a view to transporting the products of the farm to market on its waters, and military posts were established that supplies by the river route might be easily furnished.

THE BOTTOMS—HOW FORMED—THE BENDS AND THE CROSSINGS.

Perhaps there is not in the world a more difficult stream to navigate than the Missouri river. The French-Canadian, Hubert, was right, when in his report to his government, in 1705, he said the birch-bark canoe could not be used to navigate its waters. The condition of the river has not changed; and it is the same turbulent, muddy, crooked and treacherous stream today that it was when first seen by this adventurous Frenchman 200 years ago. But it has served its purpose well.

*When, in 1541, Francis Vasques Coronado came into Kansas on his famous expedition in search of Quivira, the Indians told him of a large river "which flowed over toward where the sun came from." "They said that the river (which was the Missouri) was more than a league wide and that there were many canoes on it." (See Winship's translation of Coronado, Chap. XIX.)

The greatest difficulty encountered, in navigating the river, was caused by constant changes in the shifting of the channel. From the mouth of the Platte to the Mississippi on each side of the river are bluffs which parallel each other at an average distance of two miles. The channel, except during a flood, is confined to from one-fourth to one-half this distance, leaving the remainder bottom land. This bottom, which is alluvial soil, originally covered with a primeval forest, furnishes a leeway for the channel. It is "made land," caused from accretions, and the river has never relinquished its title to it. It may have been thousands of years in forming, but sooner or later the channel will go back to its original bed and claim its own. When the channel of the river changes it leaves a sandbar, which soon becomes overgrown with willows and young cottonwoods. These catch and retain the silt of subsequent overflows, which continually raises the surface of the accretion, until, together with decaying vegetation, it becomes as high as the adjacent land. This process goes on for centuries, and in this way the bottom lands along the Missouri river have been formed.

Surveys made along the lower river during the Spanish regime, and even during the early part of the last century, substantiate the correctness of this theory; but if further evidence is required let a hole be bored down anywhere in the river bottom—a mile or more from the present bed of the river—and it is probable that at a distance of about twenty-five feet, or when the level of the water in the river is reached, a rack-heap, or an old log, will be struck, that has lain there, imbedded in the clay soil

for centuries; thus proving conclusively that the channel of the river at one time flowed there.*

The most dangerous localities on the river were the bends, and it was in them that most of the accidents occurred to the steamboats. They were formed in the following manner: The main channel of the river is disposed to follow the bluff shore, and does so until it meets with some obstruction. A trifling object, such as a rack-heap, or an old steamboat wreck, will sometimes deflect the current and send it off obliquely to the opposite shore. As the land where it strikes is, as has been stated, underlaid with a stratum of white sand, it melts before the strong current as a snowbank before the noonday's sun. This undermining process goes on at every rise, until in the course of a few years a great bend is formed; thousands of acres of land are swept away; and the channel of the river is a mile or more away from where it formerly ran.

Some of these bends are as much as twenty miles long and have been many years in forming. The land along the shore was originally covered with a dense growth of large timber—cottonwood, elm, walnut, etc. As the banks were undermined these immense trees tumbled into the channel and floated along with the current

*In 1858 the town of Brunswick, Mo., was situated on the bank of the Missouri river and was the shipping point for all the Grand river country. It is now an inland town and the river flows five miles away. In 1896 a farmer was digging a well in the river bottom, near the town, where the river formerly ran. A Bible was found in the excavation, and on its cover was the name, "Naomi." The book was sent to some of the old steamboat men in St. Louis, to see if they could suggest any explanation of its strange presence where found. It was distinctly recalled by Capt. Jo La Barge, and others of the old steamboat men, that the steamer "Naomi" was wrecked at that identical spot in 1840. It was the custom of the missionary societies to present to each boat, when she came out, a Bible, which was attached to the table in the ladies' cabin by a small brass chain. On the back of the book was lettered the name of the boat.

until their roots—the heaviest part—after dragging awhile became anchored in the bottom of the river. There they remained for years, some extending above the surface of the water and others beneath and out of sight. The former, from being continuously in motion, caused by the swift current, were called “sawyers.” From the velocity of the current, and the innumerable snags, the bends were a continued menace to steamboats, and no pilot approached one, especially at night, without trepidation and fear.

Each bend had its own name, sometimes derived from the name of a planter, who lived nearby, or from some steamboat, which had been previously wrecked there. Among the former were “Murray’s,” “Howard’s,” “Wolf’s,” “Penn’s,” and “Pitman’s Bend.” Among the later were “Malta Bend,” “Diana,” “Bertrand,” “Alert,” and “Sultan Bend.” Among the most noted localities on the river, noted because they were the most dangerous and contained the greatest number of wrecks, were Brickhouse Bend, Bonne-homme Bend, Augusta Bend and Osage Chute. Many a magnificent steamer was wrecked in them, and with them the fortunes of their owners. Each is today a marine graveyard. There were other bends which bore euphonious names, such as “Nigger Bend,” and “Jackass Bend,” and a good story could be told as to how the latter received its name, if space permitted.

Where the current changed from one side of the river to the other were called “crossings,” and it was there that the greatest difficulty was encountered by the navigator; although, as there were no snags in such places, there were no disasters. The water spreads out over a large space at these crossings, and instead of one main channel there are many chutes, neither of which, in a

low stage of water, was deep enough to float a boat heavily loaded. The boats ran aground, in low water, in these crossings, and frequently were several days in getting over the bar. In such cases the spars were resorted to. They were two long poles, one on each side of the bow of the boat, attached to the capstan by tackle. They were thrown overboard, and by means of pushing on them the vessel was virtually lifted over the bar as with a pair of stilts. It was no unusual sight, in the palmy days of steamboating, to see as many as a half dozen fine steamers aground on a crossing within a short distance of each other. It was push and pull, spar and warp, back and go ahead, night and day, without a moment's cessation until the boat was safely over the bar. The jingling of the bells, the hissing of steam, together with the swearing of the mate, rendered it an animated and interesting scene to the passenger, as he stood on the hurricane deck and looked on, but it was terrible on the crew.

CRAFT USED ON THE RIVER BEFORE THE DAYS OF THE STEAMBOAT.

The craft in use in navigating the Missouri river before the advent of the steamboat were the canoe, the *perogue*, the *batteau*, the keelboat, the mackinaw boat and the bullboat.

It is not necessary to describe the canoe, as its universal use, today, has rendered it a familiar object. The birch-bark canoe, so often seen on the northern lakes, was not adapted to the Missouri on account of its frail construction; and besides, the birch tree, from which the bark was taken, is not found on the river. The craft universally used was the cottonwood canoe, or "dug-out," made

from a log fifteen to twenty-five feet long and three or four feet in diameter. The cottonwood grows along the river everywhere, and such logs were easily procured. This canoe possessed the requisites of strength, lightness of draft and durability, and was not only the primitive craft of the French *voyageur*, but had been in use by the Indian from time immemorial.

The *perogue* was another craft used by the French in the fur trade, to which it was especially adapted. It was really a double canoe, built in the shape of a flat-iron, with a sharp bow and a square stern. Two canoes were securely fastened together a short distance apart, the whole being decked over with plank or punch-ions. On the floor was placed the cargo, which was protected from the weather by skins. The boat was propelled upstream by oars or a line, and steered by an oarsman, who stood on the stern. A square sail was also resorted to, going upstream, when the wind was in the right quarter, and a distance of from ten to fifteen miles per day could be made under favorable conditions. Such boats were usually from thirty to forty feet long and from six to eight feet beam, and being of light draft were good carriers. They were much safer than the canoe, as from breadth of beam they could not be upset.*

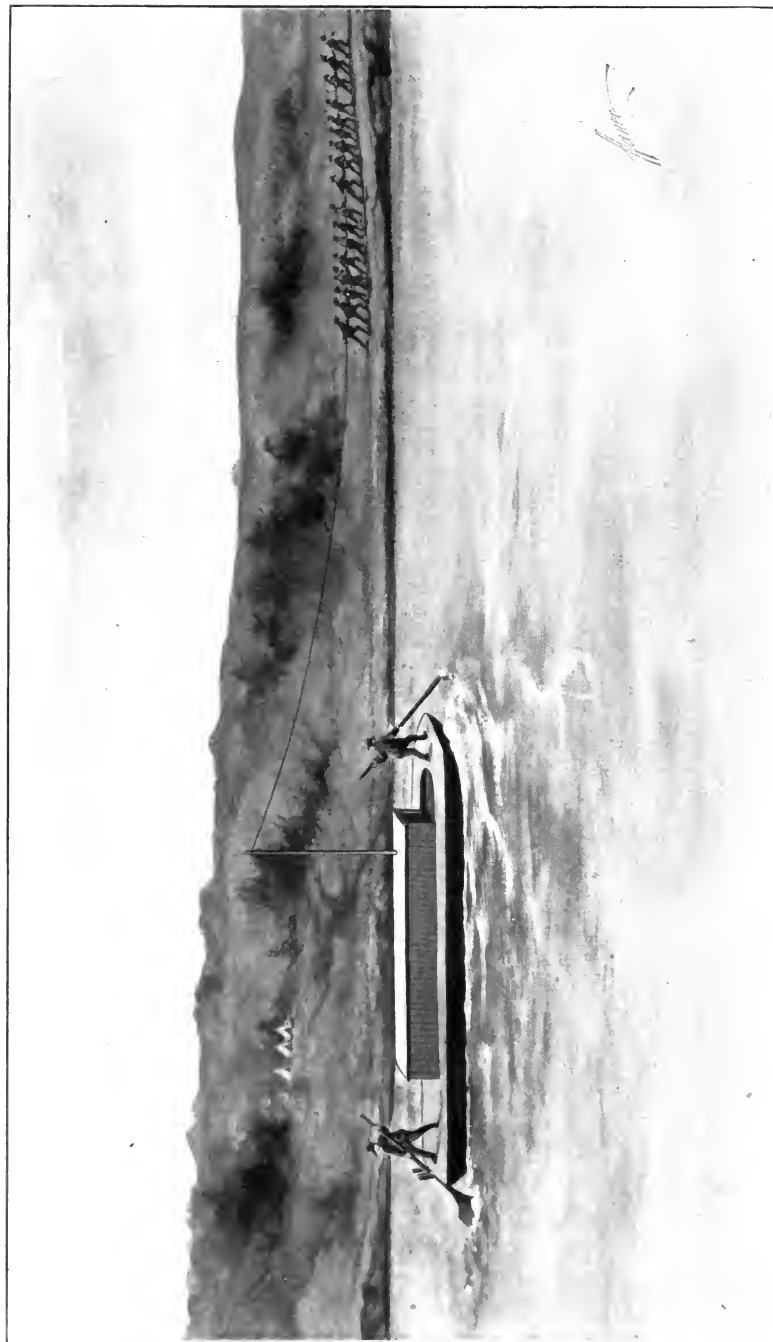
The *batteau*, as its name indicates, was still another craft employed by the early French fur-trader. It was a flat-bottomed, clumsily constructed boat, especially adapted to transporting a cargo of furs down stream, and did not differ materially from the flat-bottomed boat. It was usually 50 to 75 feet long and

*When Lewis and Clark ascended the Missouri river in 1804 their fleet consisted of one keelboat and two *perogues*.

10 to 12 feet beam. The gunwales were hewn from cottonwood logs, and the bottom was spiked on to stringers running lengthwise the boat. The bow and stern were square, with a sufficient rake to prevent impeding headway. The oar, the pole, the line and the sail were the appliances relied upon for motive power in ascending the stream, but in going down the boat was allowed to float with the current, being kept in the channel by the steersman.

A very unique craft in use, from 1810 to 1830, on the upper tributaries of the Missouri—the Platte, the Yellowstone and the Niobrara—by the fur-trader, was the bullboat. It was especially adapted to the navigation of these streams on account of its extreme lightness of draft. Indeed, the excessive shallowness of the water in these streams—which rarely exceeded 12 inches—precluded navigation by any other boat. It was probably the lightest draft boat ever constructed for its size, but could carry a cargo of from 5,000 to 6,000 pounds.

The framework of the bullboat was constructed of willow poles, 25 or 30 feet long, laid lengthwise; and across these other poles were laid. All were then securely fastened together with raw-hide thongs. Along the tops of the vertical portions of the frame-work, on the inside, was then lashed stout poles like those forming the bottom of the boat, which served as gunwales. To these gunwales were lashed cross poles, to prevent the former from spreading. Not a nail was used in the entire structure, all fastenings being secured with rawhide thongs. The frame, so constructed, was then covered with buffalo hides sewed together



THE KEELBOAT IN THE FUR TRADE.

with sinews, the seams being pitched with a cement made of buffalo-tallow and ashes.

A similarly constructed boat, to the one described above, although much smaller and of a different shape, was in use on the Upper Missouri by the Mandan Indians when they were first visited by the Hudson Bay traders, about 1790. This boat was about the size and shape of a washtub, and one buffalo hide was sufficient to cover it. It could safely carry one person.

THE KEELBOAT.

The return of Lewis and Clark from the Rocky mountains, in 1806, and the wonderful account they brought back of the immense number of beaver and other fur-bearing animals found in that country, at once gave a new impetus to the fur trade. Companies were formed in St. Louis of the most enterprising merchants who invested sufficient capital to prosecute the trade with intelligence and vigor. The most skillful and experienced boatmen were employed to command the boats, which were destined for the mouth of the Yellowstone. The distance was nearly 2,000 miles against a strong current, and much of the route lay through a country inhabited by fierce and warlike tribes. The voyage was one of great labor, hardship and danger, and only the most suitable and best equipped craft that could be devised would answer the purpose of such a venture. The keelboat was destined to supply this want. It was the steamboat without steam as a motive power.

The keelboat was usually from 50 to 75 feet long and 15 to 20 feet beam. The keelson extended from stem to stern, and it was a staunch vessel, well modeled, sharp bow and stern, and built by

skillful workmen after the most approved methods of shipcraft of that day. Such a boat had a carrying capacity of ten to twenty tons, a draft of thirty inches light, and cost, usually from \$2,000 to \$3,000. Amidship was the cabin, extending four or five feet above the hull, in which was stored the cargo of Indian merchandise. On each side of this cabin was a narrow walk, called by the French "*passe-a-vant*," on which the boatmen walked in pushing the boat along with poles. The appliances used for ascending the river, were the *cordelle*, the pole, the oar and the sail.

The *cordelle*, however, was the main reliance. It was a line sometimes 300 yards long, which was fastened to the top of a mast extending from the center of the boat. The boat was pulled along by this line by a long string of from twenty to thirty men, who walked along the shore. When an obstacle was encountered, which prevented the men from walking along the bank, the line was made fast to some object on shore, and she was pulled up by pulling on the line. This process was called "warping." There were shallow places along the river where it became necessary to use the pole, and in such places they were resorted to. The oars came into use in making crossings, when it became necessary to cross from one side of the river to the other, as it frequently did.

The crew of a keelboat, in the fur-trade—called a "brigade"—frequently consisted of as many as a hundred men, although this number included many hunters and trappers, en route to the mountains, who were not regular boatmen. They went well armed, and every boat carried on her bow a small cannon, called a "swivel." The captain of the boat, called the "*patron*," did the steering, and his assistant, called the "*bosseman*," stood on the bow, pole in hand,

and gave directions to the men on the *cordelle*. It was necessary that these officers should be men of great energy, physical strength and personal courage. The sail was seldom used, except in the upper river, where the absence of timber rendered the wind available.

It required nearly the entire boating season to make a trip to the Yellowstone, and as may well be imagined the labor was most arduous. If a distance of fifteen miles a day was made it was considered a good day's work. It was push and pull, through rain and storm, from daylight to dark; and it is exceedingly doubtful if men could be hired at any price at this day to perform such laborious work. The rations furnished consisted of pork and beans and lye-hominy, and from this allowance the pork was cut off when game could be procured by the hunters. There was no coffee and no bread.

The boatmen employed on these voyages were French Canadians, or Creoles, and many of them were off-shoots from the *Courieur--de-bois*. They were in some respects different from their progenitors, for they were a hard-working, obedient, cheerful class, and were happy and contented under the most discouraging circumstances. They constituted a peculiar and interesting type of pioneer life on the Missouri river, now, like the woodsmen, entirely extinct. Many of the sons of these early *voyageurs*— the La Barges, the Fectos, the Guerettes, the Dripps, and others, became pilots on the first steamboats on the river, and their sons, following the occupation of their fathers, stood their "trick at the wheel," as long as there was a steamboat on the river.

A KEELBOAT RACE.

In the spring of 1811 there occurred on the Missouri river the strangest race ever run on any river in the West. It was a race between two keelboats from St. Louis to the mouth of the Yellowstone, a distance of 1,790 miles.

John Jacob Astor was then preparing to establish his trading post—Astoria—at the mouth of the Columbia river, and in addition to an expedition sent by sea, around Cape Horn, had projected another up the Missouri river to cross over the mountains and join them on the Pacific. The latter was to be under the command of Wilson Price Hunt—a partner of Astor's. Hunt wintered on the Missouri river at the mouth of a small stream called the Nodaway, a little above the site of St. Joseph, Mo., and set off up the river early in March. Manuel Lisa, the pioneer fur-trader—who has been referred to, and who, in 1807, took the first keelboat up the Missouri, and also built the first house in what is now Montana—was in command of a boat belonging to an opposition company.

It was important that Lisa should reach the tribe of Indians on the upper river—with whom he proposed to trade—ahead of Hunt. He left St. Louis on April 2nd, 1811—a month behind Hunt—but by great exertion overtook him on June 11th, after traveling 1,100 miles, or about half the distance to the Yellowstone. He therefore made 1,100 miles in 61 days, an average of 18 miles per day. The voyage was considered a most remarkable one and the time was never beaten on the Missouri river by a keelboat. The race, which continued on up the river, resulted in bad feeling between the *patrons* and crews of the rival boats,

which finally terminated, further up the river, in treachery and a bloody tragedy. But that is another story.

It is impossible, in this age of steam and electricity, for anyone, unacquainted with the character of the Missouri river, to comprehend the difficulties of such a voyage as these boats made in 1811. At the break of day the horn of the *patron* called the men to the *cordelle*, and from that time till dark they tugged along the shore where the foot of a white man had never trod before. Half bent, in water, over rocks, and through brambles and brush, they pulled against the swift current for six long months, until at last the glistening snow, on the peaks of the Rockies, gave assurance that they were approaching their journey's end.

THE MACKINAW BOAT.

The mackinaw boat was made entirely of cottonwood plank about two inches thick. They were built about fifty to sixty feet long with twelve foot beam, and had a flat bottom. The gunwales arose about three feet above the water-line, amidship, and increased in height toward the bow and stern. In the bottom of the boat were stringers, running fore and aft, and to these were spiked the bottom plank, in the first years with wooden pins, but later with iron nails. The sides, which were also of plank, were supported by knees, at proper distances. The keel showed a rake of thirty inches, fore and aft, and the hold had a depth of four feet amidship and about five feet on the bow and stern.

In the middle of the boat was a space partitioned off with bulkheads, similar to the cargo-box of the keelboat, which has been described. In this was stored the cargo of furs (put up in bales),

which extended several feet above the gunwales. The entire cargo, consisting of beaver and other valuable furs, was then covered over with buffalo skins securely fastened to the gunwales by cleats. The poop, on the deck of which the steersman stood, was used as quarters for the men. The voyage was always made on the June rise, and as the current was then swift, and there was no danger from sandbars, a distance of 100 miles per day was made. A crew of five men was all that was necessary, as the boat simply floated down with the current. The only danger anticipated was from the snags in the bends and the Indians, and these had to be carefully guarded against. For mutual protection the mackinaw boats usually went down in fleets of from 6 to 12, but it was not unusual for a single boat to make the long voyage alone. A trip down the Missouri river, was to the mountaineer, an event of a lifetime and one never forgotten. They have been described by such early travelers as Catlin, Hunt, Wyeth, Brackenridge, Lewis and Clark, De Smet and others.

As the mackinaw boat was only intended for a single voyage down the river they were cheaply built. There was near every large trading post, on the river, a boat-yard, called by the French a *chantier*, where the lumber was gotten out and the boat constructed. There were no saw-mills in the upper country in that day, and the lumber was sawed out with a whipsaw. It was a tedious process, but answered the purpose.

In the spring of 1845, as a barefooted boy, the writer stood on the bank of the Missouri, opposite Jefferson City, Mo., and saw what was probably the last mackinaw boat pass down and out of the river. There were ten or twelve boats in the fleet, and as

they passed, at intervals of half an hour or more, they were all the morning in view. It was the last of this primitive mode of navigation and marked the end of the fur-trade on the Missouri river. The steamboat had supplanted the keelboat, in the upper river fur-trade, in 1832, but it never supplanted the mackinaw boat while the trade continued, for that craft furnished the cheapest transportation—in this particular trade—for down stream navigation, ever devised.

THE RISE AND FALL OF STEAMBOATING.

In following down the evolution that has taken place in the navigation of the Missouri river we come at last to the steamboat—the *par excellence* of all water craft on Western rivers.

The new craft came none too soon to supply the rapidly increasing demand for transportation in the West; and it is a remarkable coincidence that the same year—1807—in which the first Anglo-American settlement was made on the Missouri witnessed the successful application of steam, as a motive power, on the Hudson. The settlement of the country along the Missouri river was greatly retarded, for several years after the Louisiana purchase, by continual conflicts with the Indians; and it was not until after the War of 1812, when they were driven out of the country and peace reigned, that immigration from the older states began to flow into the new territory. Previous to the advent of these pioneers, the *perogue*, the *batteau* and the keelboat had been sufficient to supply the limited wants of the fur-trader, but the time had now come, with the change of government, the arrival of the Anglo-Saxon, and the rapid advancement of civilization,

when better facilities were demanded by the growing commerce of the West. The surplus products of the alluvial soil must find transportation to the markets of the world. Without such facilities the settlement of the country would have been retarded many years, and the rapid development which did occur, would not have been witnessed. The steamboat was destined to supply this want, and prove the great factor, not only in the development of the Mississippi valley, but in revolutionizing the commerce of the world.

For several years, foreseeing the urgent need of additional transportation, especially on inland waters, the inventive genius of the American mind had been engaged in an endeavor to supply this want by applying steam as a motive power to river craft. As early as 1737 Jonathan Hulls—an Englishman—had made some experiments along this line, but had failed. The first attempt made in this country was by James Rumsey. He was so far successful as to construct a boat, in 1786, which he propelled on the Potomac river at the rate of four or five miles an hour; but the experiment, for some reason, proved a failure. Others, during the same period, were endeavoring to accomplish the same object—Symington, in Scotland, John Stevens, at New York, and Oliver Evans at Philadelphia. Each partially succeeded, but all failed, either from the want of proper facilities for manufacturing the machinery, from a proper conception of the application of the power of steam, or more likely from the want of sufficient means to advantageously prosecute their experiments. Without an exception, having exhausted their resources, they died poor.

In 1786—the same year in which Rumsey was experimenting on the Potamac—John Fitch, a Connecticut Yankee, was making similar experiments on the Delaware; and was so far successful that in 1789 he built a boat that ran for several miles on that stream. He, however, finally, like his co-workers, failed for want of sufficient means to carry forward his efforts to a successful termination. He died a pauper, and the following record, found in his diary, after his death, is pathetic. He said: “The day will come when some man, more fortunate than I, will get fame and riches from my invention. But nobody will believe that poor John Fitch can do anything.”

The dying prediction of John Fitch proved prophetic, for twenty years after his death, a young mechanical genius of Philadelphia—Robert Fulton—came into possession of Fitch’s plans and drawings, and with the financial assistance of Chancellor Livingston of New York, who became associated with him, carried into practical effect the ideas and plans of the man who was, in fact, the inventor of the steamboat. The world has given to Fulton the honor which justly belongs to the unfortunate genius whose ashes repose at Bardstown, Ky.; where he was buried on the banks of the Ohio. He requested on his death-bed that he might be buried there, that, as he said: “The future traveler on that stream may point to my grave and say, ‘there lies the man who invented the steamboat’.”

It was in August, 1807 that the *Clermont*—Fulton’s boat—made her first successful trip on the Hudson; and from that day and that trip steamboat navigation became an assured fact and the trade and travel of the world entered on a new era.

The complete success attending steam navigation on the Hudson immediately turned the attention of the principal projectors, and others, to its application on the Western rivers, and in April, 1809, Nicholas Roosevelt, a great-uncle of President Roosevelt, who had become associated with Fulton, went to Pittsburg and there built a boat called the "*New Orleans*."

The history of this boat—the first built west of the Alleghenies—is interesting. She was a lubberly craft, 138 feet keel, 20 feet beam and had a measurement of 370 tons. She had an upper deck, a small cabin, in the hold, and was built at a cost of \$38,000. Before risking his boat on the perilous voyage to New Orleans, Captain Roosevelt, the principal owner, went down the river on a flat-boat, for the purpose of determining if his steamboat could stem the current of the Mississippi. The voyage required six months, and it was not until the 10th of December, 1811, that the *New Orleans* cast off her moorings at iPittsburg. As she proceeded down the river her appearance created a mixture of fear and surprise among the settlers along the banks, many of whom had never heard of such an invention as a steamboat. The vessel reached Louisville, a distance of 700 miles, in four days, and shot the Falls under a full head of steam. She passed New Madrid on the night of December 6th, just as the great earthquake occurred, the most astounding convulsion of nature ever known on this continent. Finally, after a long and tedious voyage, she arrived at the city of New Orleans, and there, while lying at the levee, caught fire from the upsetting of a stove and was burned.

While other boats, of crude and imperfect construction, fol-

lowed the *New Orleans*, such is the velocity of the current in the Mississippi that it was not until 1815 that sufficient improvement had been made in their machinery as to enable them to overcome this obstruction to navigation. In that year the "*Enterprise*" made the first successful trip up the river. She left New Orleans on May 6th and arrived at Louisville on the 31st, making the voyage in twenty-five days; a remarkable achievement in that day.

Owing to the difficulty that has been referred to—the swift current of the Mississippi—it was not until 1817 that any steamboat succeeded in ascending that stream above the mouth of the Ohio. On August 2nd, 1817, the steamer "*Gen. Pike*"—a side wheeler—came up the river and landed at St. Louis, being the first steamboat to land at that place. Her arrival was attended with great demonstrations of joy among the inhabitants, who justly considered the event as the beginning of a new era in the destinies of the Mississippi valley.

THE FIRST STEAMBOAT ON THE MISSOURI.

It was not until 1819 that any attempt was made to navigate the Missouri river by steam. The *voyageurs* and traders up that stream had long given it as their opinion that the tortuous channel, the strong current, and the innumerable snags and sandbars would render steam navigation impossible. Such, however, were the increasing demands of commerce that Col. Rector, and others, of St. Louis, in the spring of that year, chartered a steamboat called the "*Independence*," John Nelson, master, to make a voyage to Olé Chariton, the name of a town then located near the town of Glasgow, Mo., but which has long since disappeared from the maps.

The *Independence* left St. Louis May 15th, 1819, and arrived at Old Franklin—another abandoned town—on the 28th. She continued her voyage to Chariton and returned to St. Louis on June 5th. It was a slow and tedious voyage, but it solved the question of navigating the Missouri river by steamboat.

During June of the same year—1819—a fleet of steamboats left St. Louis on a voyage up the Missouri river under the command of Major Stephen H Long, a United States Army officer. This expedition, which was partly scientific and partly military—the troops being under the command of Gen. Atkinson—is known in history as “Long’s Expedition.” He was instructed to proceed as high up the river as the mouth of the Yellowstone, to ascertain if the upper river could be navigated by steamboats, and also to establish military posts. It was intended to make a grand military display, and thus, by overawing the Indians on the upper river, withdraw them from the influence of the British, who were then contending for the fur trade in that region.

The names of the four steamboats which constituted the fleet were “*Thomas Jefferson*,” “*R. M. Johnson*,” “*Expedition*,” and “*Western Engineer*.” The *Jefferson* struck a snag in Osage Chute, at the mouth of the Osage, and sunk; being the first steamboat of the many wrecked on the Missouri river. The *Western Engineer* had been built expressly for this expedition, and from her unique construction is worthy of a description. She was a small stern-wheeler, being perhaps the first boat of that kind built. She was 75 feet long, 13 feet beam and drew twenty inches light. She was intended to impress the Indians with awe, and there is no doubt she did so. On her bow, running from her ke’ls’n for-

ward, was the escape pipe, made in imitation of a huge serpent—painted black and its mouth and tongue painted a fiery red. The steam escaped from the mouth of the serpent, and in its passage—at intervals—created a loud wheezing noise, or puff, like the dying groans of a great sea-monster. The noise could be heard for miles, and we can readily imagine that the Indian, who saw this wonderful piece of marine mechanism, recognized in it the power of the Great Maniteau.*

The *Johnson*, the *Expedition*, and the *Jefferson* left St. Louis on June 5th, 1819; the *Jefferson*, on account of her name, being given precedence, was the first to enter the mouth of the Missouri. After many delays, caused by breaking of machinery, the two first mentioned boats arrived at Cantonment Martin* on Sept. 18th. The *Western Engineer* left St. Louis on June 7th, arrived at Franklin on the 24th, where she laid by several days. She then proceeded on her voyage, and, being of lighter draft, passed the other two boats and arrived at the same destination on August 28th.||

On their arrival at Cow Island the *Expedition* and *Johnson* tied up, and the troops went into winter quarters. As their boats were found to be entirely unfit for the river they returned to St. Louis in the spring. The *Western Engineer*, which proved to be the only boat of the fleet at all adapted to the navigation of the river, although she could only make three miles an hour, up stream, proceeded up the river, and on the 17th of September arrived at Ft. Lisa (a trading post established by Manuel Lisa)

*Cantonment Martin—the first military post established on the Missouri west of the Kaw—was located on an island just below Atchison, Kas., called by the French "Isle Au Vache" and by the Americans "Cow Island."

|| Judge W. B. Napton, of Marshall, Mo., has in his possession a great number of old letters written by Capt. Martin, Col. John O'Fallon, Gen. Atkinson and other officers of this expedition, at different points on the river, to Gen. Smith, the general in command of the District, who was then at Franklin. From this correspondence the above data has been obtained.

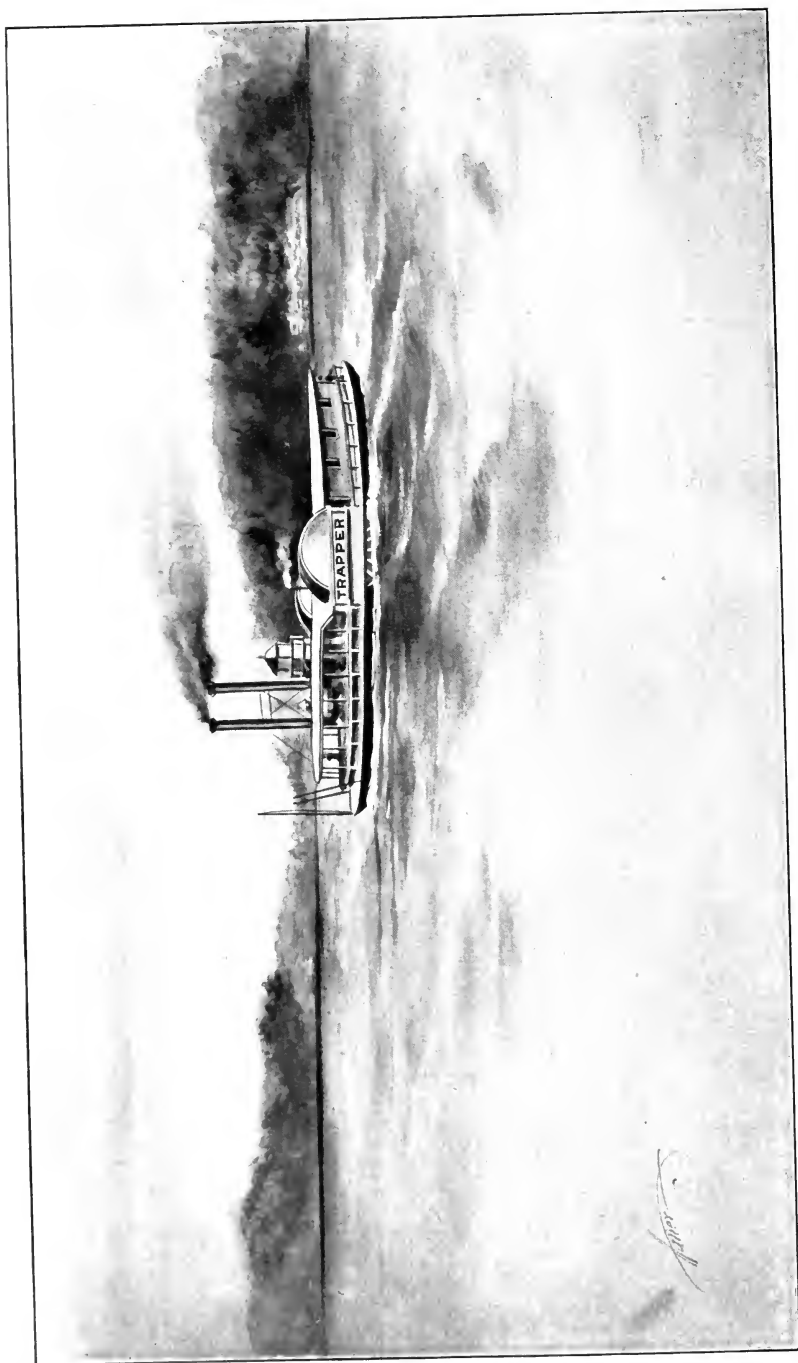
five miles below Council Bluff. Here she also went into winter quarters and returned to St. Louis in the following spring. It having become apparent that the marine part of the expedition was an unqualified failure, the river was abandoned, and Major Long, with his troops, went overland to the Platte. The machinery of the boats was so imperfectly constructed that it was continually breaking, and besides, the boats, excepting the *Engineer*, were so slow and drew so much water, that but little headway could be made.* To the little *Engineer*, however, belongs the distinction of being the first steamboat to ascend the river as high as Council Bluffs.

THE STEAMBOAT FROM 1820 TO 1850.

From the sparsely settled condition of the country, the limited demand for transportation, and the difficulties of navigation, there were but few steamboats on the Missouri river previous to 1840. Sidewheelers were the favorites then, and have ever been since, as they were more easily handled in a swift, crooked channel among snags. The boats in use during this period were heavy, clumsy craft, built of strong timbers, and were usually from 100 to 130 feet in length, 20 to 30 feet beam and 6 to 7 feet hold. But little attention was paid to the model, and they drew, with an ordinary cargo, from 5 to 6 feet. They carried a single engine, with one or two boilers. Of course, with such heavy draft and imperfect machinery, the progress of such boats, up stream, was exceedingly slow. Indeed, they did not make more than five or six miles an hour, and the puffing of the steam from their escape

*See Niles Register, Vol. XVI. Also Missouri Intelligencer, June, 1819.





THE PIONEER STEAMBOAT, 1820-1830.

pipes could be heard for miles. There were no steam whistles in that day, they were not invented until 1844, nor were they needed on these primitive boats.

During the period from 1820 to 1840 the entire traffic on the lower river was confined to the small towns, the Santa Fe trade, at Westport Landing (now Kansas City), and the government trade at Fort Leavenworth. As early as 1829 there was a regular packet between St. Louis and the latter place, which continued in the trade for several years. There were no settlements above except at St. Joseph and Council Bluffs. There was but little travel on the river during that period, and the modern cabin was not adopted until 1836. Previous to that time the only accommodation for passengers and crew was a small cabin placed on the stern of the boat in the hull. During 1831 there were only five regular boats on the Missouri river, but by 1836 the number had increased—so rapidly had the country become settled—to 15 or 20, which made 35 round trips to Boonville and Glasgow.*

Among these pioneer boats were the following—the “*Naomi*,” “*Mustang*,” “*Tamerlane*,” “*Halcyon*,” “*Mandan*,” “*Little Red*,” (the sobriquet of U. S. Senator Barton), “*Mary Tompkins*,” “*Tobacco Plant*,” “*Nodaway*,” “*Far West*,”|| “*Amelia*,” “*Corvette*,” “*Anthony Wayne*,” “*Falcon*,” “*Pirate*,” “*John Hancock*,” “*Wapello*,” “*Weston*,” “*Yucatan*,” “*Whirlwind*,” “*Undine*,” and “*John Go Long*.”

The name of the last mentioned boat is so peculiar, and the

*Gazeteer of Missouri.

||Several of these boats were built on the Missouri river, although for the most part they were built at Pittsburgh. The *Far West*, built at the mouth of the Bonne Femme, was launched Oct. 11th, 1834. She was of the following dimensions: 130 feet long, 20 feet beam and 6 feet hold. She had a tonnage of 200 tons.

circumstances under which she was named so strange, that it may be worth mentioning. A gentleman in St. Louis, who was just about completing a boat, found some difficulty in selecting a name. He had a friend named "John," who was in the habit of coming around every day, and in a teasing manner, suggesting names. The owner, at last, becoming annoyed on being again asked what name he intended giving the boat, said, "John, go long." The name was suggestive, and when the boat was completed she bore on her wheelhouse the name "*John Go Long*."

About 1840, the rapidly increasing population along the Missouri river caused a corresponding demand for additional transportation facilities. A better class of boats were built; full length cabins were adopted; and double engines, with a battery of boilers; in place of the single engine one boiler "dingey." Great improvements were also made in the model of the hull, and they were so constructed as to have the same carrying capacity and draw much less water. The same inventive genius that had invented the steamboat was continually making improvements, both in the machinery and hull, so as to add to the speed of the boat and also increase her carrying capacity.

During the year 1842 there were 26 steamboats engaged regularly in the lower river trade. They were a much better class of boats than were formerly built, and were generally from 140 to 160 feet long, about 30 feet beam, with a 6 foot hold. They had full length cabins and side wheels. There were 312 arrivals and departures from Glasgow (where the following record was kept), during the year, and the *Iatan*—the regular Glasgow packet—made 24 weekly trips from St. Louis. During the season 46,000 tons of different kinds of freight were transported.*

*See "Missouri Intelligencer" and "Patriot."

Among the names of the boats on the Missouri river in 1842 were the following: "*Shawnee*," "*Emiline*," "*Col. Woods*," "*Gen. Leavenworth*," "*Bowling Green*," "*Iatan*," "*Platte*," "*Thames*," "*Gen. Brady*," "*Oceana*," "*Roebuck*," "*Manhattan*," "*Malta*," "*Lehigh*," "*Osage Valley*," "*Gloster*," "*Amazon*," "*Huntsville*," "*Lewis F. Linn*," and "*Warsaw*."

THE STEAMBOAT IN THE FUR TRADE.

It was during this period that the steamboat superseded the keelboat in the upper river fur-trade. This trade had so increased as to require a better method of transportation, and besides, such improvement had been made in the construction of the steamboats as to lead the fur companies to believe that they could successfully be used in navigating the upper river as well as the lower. In 1831, Pierre Chouteau, who was then at the head of the American Fur Company, built a boat called the "*Yellowstone*," intended for the mountain trade. She was 130 feet long, 19 feet beam, 6 feet hold; good model; side wheel; single engine, two chimneys; fly-wheel; cabin in the stern-hold; boiler-deck open; no hurricane roof; pilot house elevated; and drew 6 feet loaded to 75 tons. The *Yellowstone* left St. Louis April 16th, 1831, on her maiden voyage, and arrived at the mouth of Milk river, in South Dakota, on June 19th. After discharging her cargo of Indian goods she took in a cargo of furs and buffalo robes and returned to St. Louis, where she arrived July 15th. She was the first boat to ascend the Missouri river above Council Bluffs.

In the following year—1832—the *Yellowstone* made her second trip "to the mountains;" as the old river men always called

the upper Missouri. This will be ever memorable as the year in which the cholera first made its appearance in the United States. The terrible scourge followed the water courses, where at that day the population dwelt, and in proportion to the inhabitants was more fatal than it has ever been since. The *Yellowstone* did not escape the plague. She left St. Louis on March 26th, and by the time she arrived at the mouth of the Kaw one-half of her crew were dead. There was no Kansas City there then, but only a landing at Choteau's trading post, just below the present city. While lying there eight more of the crew died the first night, and were buried in a single trench on a sandbar. It being impossible to proceed further with a diminished crew, Capt. Bennett—the commander—manned the yawl with a few men, and returned to St. Louis for the purpose of obtaining an additional crew. During his absence the boat was left in charge of Joseph La Barge, then 18 years old, who was just beginning his long career of more than 50 years as a steamboatman on the Missouri river. The scourge soon spread among the few inhabitants, who were then living near the landing, and created such an alarm that they threatened to burn the boat. La Barge, perceiving the danger, raised steam himself during the night, and taking the wheel, ran the boat above the mouth of the Kaw, where, as there were no inhabitants, she remained undisturbed. On Capt. Bennett's return the boat proceeded on her voyage and arrived at the mouth of the Yellowstone on June 17th. On her return she arrived at St. Louis on July 7th. She was the first steamboat to ascend the Missouri to the mouth of the Yellowstone, and demonstrated what

Major Long had attempted to establish, that the upper Missouri was navigable by steamboats as high up as the Yellowstone.

It was the custom of the American Fur Company, which by 1830 had obtained a complete monopoly of the fur trade, to send up annually to the mountains, one boat. Occasionally two were despatched, but usually one was sufficient to carry up the supply of goods. These voyages were always attended with great danger and hardship and required the most skillful navigation. The lurking savage, as he lay concealed in the grass on the banks of the river, ready to fire on the unsuspecting boatmen, was a continual menace, and many a brush occurred between the redman and his white brother. The greatest difficulty encountered in navigating the boats was from the scarcity of fuel. There were no settlements above St. Joseph at that day, and above the Platte there was but little timber. The only wood to be obtained was from the rack-heaps, and this, being drift-wood, wet and sodden—would scarcely make steam at all. But it was the only dependence for fuel, and while half the crew were engaged in cutting wood, the other half stood guard, muskets in hand, to protect them from a surprise by the Indians.

There were other difficulties to be overcome by these early navigators. The diminished quantity of water in the upper river, and the narrowness of the channel, made it absolutely essential that the trip should be made on the June rise. This rise, caused by the melting of snow in the Rocky Mountains, begins in May and continues to the latter part of July. It required quick work and skillful navigation to take a boat from St. Louis to the Yel-

lowstone—a distance of nearly 2,000 miles—and back before the subsidence of the annual rise.

During the period from 1831 to 1846, after which the fur trade ceased to exist, the navigation of the upper Missouri was confined almost entirely to the boats belonging to the American Fur Company. Among these boats the following made the annual voyage in the years enclosed in brackets: "*Yellowstone*" (1831-2 and 3), "*Assiniboine*" (1833) "*Diana*" (1834), "*Antelope*" (1835), "*Trapper*" (1836), "*St. Peters*" (1837), "*Elk*" (1838), "*Platte*" (1839), "*Emelia*" (1840), "*Otter*" (1841), "*Shawnee*" (1842), "*Omega*" (1843), "*Ninrod*" (1844), and "*Iatan*" (1845). Other boats which made trips to the mountains during this period, some of which belonged to opposition companies, were the "*Astoria*," "*Big Horn*," "*Dacota*," "*Cheyenne*," "*St. Croix*," "*St. Ange*," "*St. Anthony*,"* "*A. S. Bennett*," and "*W. H. Ashley*."

The voyage of 1843 was made by the *Omega*. She left St. Louis April 25th and the following incident, taken from her log, which has been preserved, furnishes a living picture of the dangers to which these early boatmen were exposed. A band of Indians, hidden in the tall grass, opened fire on the boat as she passed along close to the shore. Capt. La Barge, who has been referred to, was at the wheel, and a negro called "Black Dave," who stood

*Many of the early steamboatmen, on the Upper Missouri, were French Catholics, hence we find the names of their patron saints given to their boats. The "*Bennett*" was named for the first commander of the *Yellowstone*. The "*W. H. Ashley*" for Gen. Ashley, a successful fur trader, Lieutenant Governor of Missouri, Brigadier General of State Militia, Member of Congress, and in his day the most popular man in Missouri. His remains are interred on the banks of the Missouri river, near the mouth of the Lamine river, ten miles above Boonville, Mo., in a forgotten and an unmarked grave. Such is fame.

the alternate watch, was also in the pilot house. Both were Frenchmen, as were most of the early boatmen on the upper Missouri, and Dave could scarcely speak the English language. He was as black as the ace of spades, always dressed well—with a profusion of jewelry—and might well have been taken for the King of Dahomey. Dave, whose real name was Jacques Desire, had but one fault—his timidity—caused by fear of the Indians. But he knew how to handle a wheel, and was recognized as one of the best upper river pilots in his day. When the bullets crashed through the pilot house, shattering the glass, Dave deserted the wheel, ran out of the pilot house, and took refuge behind one of the chimneys, where he remained until the battle was over. On being reprimanded for his cowardice, in deserting his post in time of danger, he replied that it was not from fear of the bullets, but that his eyesight was all he had to depend on to make a living, and he was afraid the flying pieces of glass would strike him in the eyes and put them out.

The year 1846 saw the end of the fur trade on the upper Missouri, but by that time the government had established military posts in that section and a few straggling settlements had sprung up. The supplies necessary for these posts were transported up the river on steamboats, which thus supplanted the fur company boats. The number, however, was still limited to one or two a season. The principal points, above Council Bluffs, during this period, were Fort Pierre, Fort Clark, Milk River, La Chapelle, Cheyenne, Fort Union, Yankton, Fort Randall, and Fort Benton.*

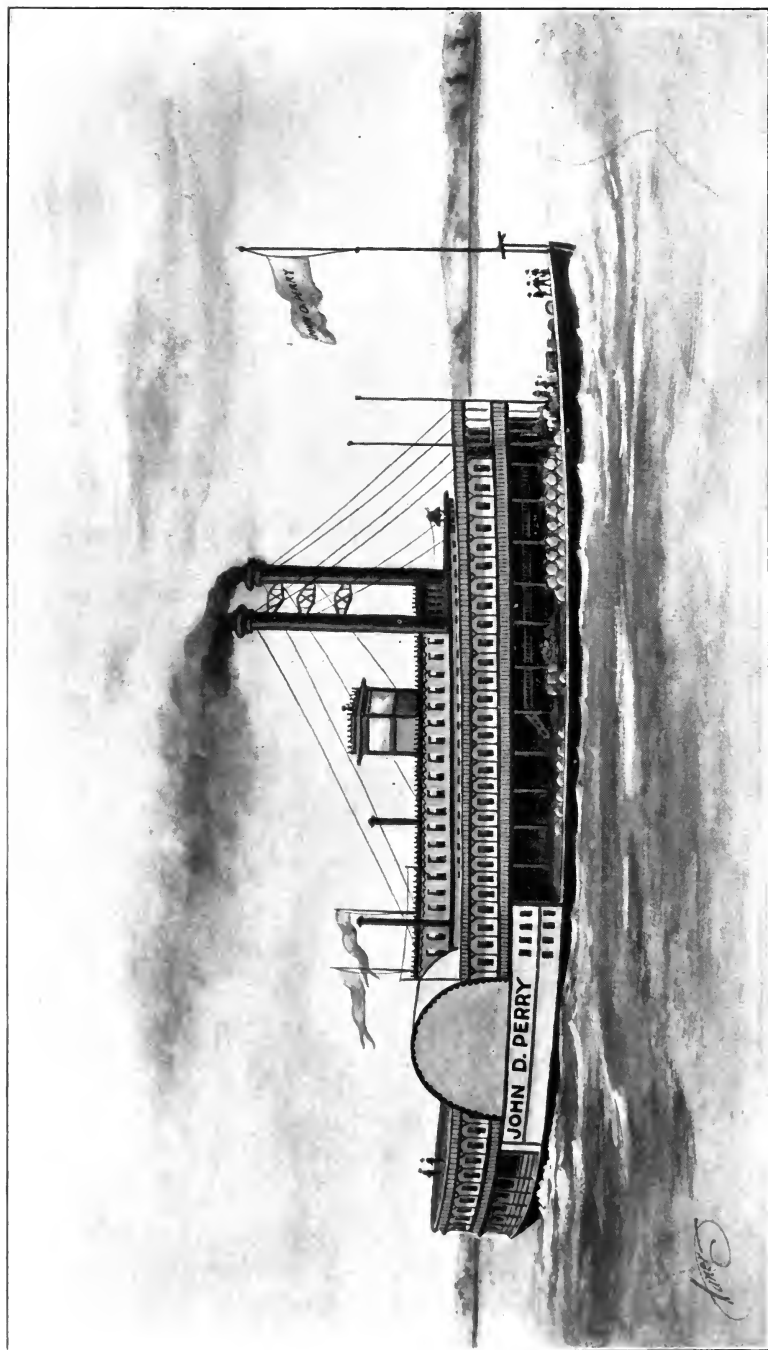
*Ft. Benton was the head of navigation on the Missouri river, and was in the days of steamboating a place of great importance. The Yellowstone was formerly navigated as high up as the mouth of the Big Horn.

Many of these places, once so well known, have since been wiped off the map.

The voyage of 1844 was made by the *Nimrod*. She was a new boat, built by the American Fur Company, and her log of the voyage, like that of others during this period, has been preserved. This was the year of the great flood in the Missouri river, the greatest, except that of 1903, that has ever occurred since the settlement of the country. When the *Nimrod* arrived at the village of the Maha Indians, a short distance below the present location of Sioux City, she found the water so low that she was compelled to tie up and wait for a rise. After a delay of several days she proceeded on her voyage. As this was in June, it is a noteworthy fact, and refutes the popular impression that the overflows of the Missouri river always come from the annual mountain rise, caused by the melting of snow. It is true that the melting of the snow in the mountains serves to augment the flood, by keeping the stage of the water high, and thus becomes an important factor in an overflow, but no great flood in the Missouri was ever caused by the melting of the snow alone. They are invariably accompanied by unusual precipitation in the vast watershed of the Kaw, and other tributaries, flowing into the lower part of the river, just as the annual June rise reaches that part of the river; which is about the first of June.

THE GOLDEN ERA—1850 TO 1860.

In the history of steamboat navigation on the Missouri river the decade between 1850 and 1860 may be properly termed the "Golden Era." The improvements which had been made, both in



A MISSOURI RIVER STEAMBOAT, 1850-1860.

the machinery and the construction of the hull, the adaptation of the stateroom cabin, and the systematizing of the business, all tended to lessen the danger of navigation and increase the profits. The advancement made in navigation on the Missouri river had kept pace with the march of commerce in other parts of the world.

The first navigator on the Missouri river was the little blue-winged teal duck; the next the Indian, with his canoe. Then came the half-civilized French-Canadian *voyageur* with his *perogue*, paddling up stream or *cordelling* around the swift points. At a later day came the fur trader with his keel-boat; still later there came up from below the little "dingey"—the single engine one boiler steamboat—which has been described. At last the evolution was complete and there came the magnificent passenger steamer of the '50s—the floating palace of the palmy days of steamboating—combining in her construction every improvement that experience had suggested, or the ingenuity of man had devised, to increase the speed or add to the safety and comfort of the passenger.

The fully equipped passenger steamer, in the hey-day of steamboating on the Missouri river, was a magnificent specimen of marine architecture. She was generally about 250 feet long, 40 feet beam, and had a full length cabin capable of accommodating from 300 to 400 people. The texas, occupied solely by the officers, was on the hurricane roof. In addition to her passenger accommodation she had a freight capacity of from 500 to 700 tons. She was well proportioned, symmetrical, trim, fast and sat on the water like a thing of life. Her two tall chimneys, with ornamental tops—between which was usually suspended some gilt letter or device—added much to her beauty. The pilot house, on top of the

texas, was highly ornamented with glass windows on every side, a fancy railing of scroll-work surrounded the guards of the boiler deck and texas. The entire boat, excepting the chimneys, was painted a dazzling white.

The cabin of the boat—a long, narrow salon—was a marvel of beauty in its snow-white splendor. The floors of the cabin were covered with the softest Brussels carpets, and the state-rooms were supplied with every convenience. Indeed, the bridal chambers were perfect gems of elegance and luxury. The table was elegantly furnished, and the menu unsurpassed by that of any first-class hotel. Each boat had, in the ladies' cabin, a piano, and generally a brass band and always a string band was carried. After the table was cleared away at night a dance was always in order, the old Virginia reel being the favorite dance. The social feature of a trip on one of these elegant boats was most charming.

The machinery and boilers of the boat were on the main deck. The latter, consisting of a battery of six or eight cylinders, was placed over a huge furnace. The machinery, consisting of two ponderous engines, ran as smoothly as the movements of a watch, and furnished the motive power to turn the two immense wheels, one on either side of the boat. The cost of such a boat as has been described, was, during the period between 1850 and 1860, from \$50,000 to \$75,000.

The crew of a first class passenger steamer consisted of a captain, two clerks, two pilots, four engineers, two mates, a watchman, a lamplighter, a porter, a carpenter and a painter. There were besides a steward, four cooks, two chambermaids, a deck

crew of about forty men, and a cabin crew—generally colored—of about twenty. There were also a barber and a barkeeper, for a bar was always an indispensable attachment to a first-class steamboat. The entire crew consisted of from 75 to 90 people.

The wages paid were commensurate with the labor and danger, as well as the profits of the business. Captains received from \$250 to \$300 per month, clerks from \$125 to \$250, mates from \$100 to \$250, engineers about the same as mates. Of course, these wages included board.

It was the pilot, however, who divided the profits with the owner, and sometimes received the larger share. He was the autocrat of the boat and absolutely controlled her navigation. It was for him to determine when the boat should run at night and when she should lay by. He received princely wages, sometimes as much as \$1,000 or \$1,500 per month, and he spent it like a thoroughbred. These exorbitant wages were demanded and paid as a result of a combination among the pilots called the "Pilots' Benevolent Association." It controlled the number of apprentices, and, as no man could "learn the river," as it was called, without "being shown," it absolutely controlled the number of pilots. It had a "dead sure cinch," and in compactness, in rigid enforcement of rules, and in keeping wages at high-water mark, it was a complete success, and continued to maintain its organization as long as steamboating was profitable.

Piloting on the Missouri river was a science, and the skillful pilot was a man of wonderful memory of localities. No man, indeed, ever became a first-class pilot who was not endowed with this peculiar faculty. He was required to know the river through-

out his entire run as a schoolboy knows the path to the school-house. He had to know it thoroughly, upside down, endways, inside, outside, and crossways. He had to know it at midnight of the darkest night—when called on watch—as well as in daylight. He was expected to know every sandbar, every crossing, chute, tow-head and cutoff; the location of every wreck and every dangerous snag, from one end of the river to the other. He had also to be able to determine the location of the boat on the darkest night from the reverbration of the sound of the whistle, as the echo resounded from the adjacent bluffs. He was expected to know every landmark on the shore, the location of every cabin, and the peculiar bark of every squatter's dog.

THE PILOT AND THE DOG.

On one occasion a pilot attempted to make a crossing near Hill's Landing, on the lower river, on an exceedingly dark night. He missed the channel and ran the bow of the boat square up against a bluff sandbar. On being scolded by the captain, he admitted that he could not recognize a single landmark, so extreme was the darkness, but had guided the boat solely by the familiar bark of a dog, which belonged to a wood-chopper whose cabin stood near the head of the crossing. The dog was accustomed to come out on the bank of the river, whenever a boat approached, and saluting it vigorously, by barking, until it had passed. Unfortunately, on this particular night, the dog had changed his position, and was farther up the river than his usual location, which was in front of his owner's cabin.

DIFFICULTIES OF NAVIGATION.

As has been stated, the dangerous localities on the Missouri river, were the bends on account of the snags, and it was in them that most of the accidents occurred. Often has the writer stood in the pilot house, in going down stream, when, on looking ahead it seemed impossible to find a space sufficiently wide for the boat to pass between the snags. Good judgment, a keen, quick eye, and an iron nerve were prerequisites in a pilot; for there were times in the experience of every one when a miscalculation as to the power of the wind, the force of a cross-current, or even the wrong turn of the wheel, would have sent his boat to the bottom of the river. It was the custom, in running such dangerous localities, to straighten the boat at the head of the bend and then "belt her through," by throwing the throttles wide open and putting on every pound of steam. Only in this way would the boat respond to the rudder, and thus prevent flanking on the dangerous snags.

On one occasion, on a down-stream trip, which the writer recalls, there were two pilots on the boat—Capt. "Bob" Wright and his son-in-law, Gates McGarrah. The former was an old, experienced pilot, and was recognized as one among the best on the river. The younger man, who was scarcely of age, was also a skillful pilot, but a reckless, nervy, dare-devil. It was Capt. Wright's watch, when we came to the head of the bend, and he was at the wheel. McGarrah was in the texas asleep. The old man was generally cool and collected, but on this occasion, as the boat was heavily loaded and full of people, he seemed to realize his responsibility. His hands trembled like a leaf and, as I watched him, I saw that he had lost his nerve. The boat was held back, and he

sent for McGarrah. The young fellow came running into the pilot house, laughing and whistling, took the wheel, and putting on a full head of steam ran through the snags without a scratch.

Such was the amount of business done on the river during the '50s, and such the skill of the pilots, that boats in the lower trade ran day and night. No night ever became so dark as to render it necessary for the boat to tie up, especially in going up stream. A speed of ten miles an hour, up stream, was not unusual, and a distance of 150 miles was made down stream in a day. In July, 1856, the *James H. Lucas*, one of the fastest boats on the river, ran from St. Louis to St. Joseph, a distance of 600 miles, in sixty hours and fifty-seven minutes. In 1853 the *Polar Star*, another remarkably fast boat, and a great favorite, made the same run in sixty hours. When the difficulty of navigating the river, the swiftness of the current, and the crookedness of the channel, are considered, the time made by these boats is remarkable, and shows what was accomplished, in the way of speed, in the hey-day of steamboating on the Missouri.

From the peculiar character of the Missouri river, and the many obstacles to navigation, racing was never practiced on that stream as it was on the lower Mississippi. As in the case of the *Lucas* and the *Polar Star*, a particularly fast boat would sometimes make a run against time—the wager being a large pair of gilded elk horns, which were carried by the successful boat until some other beat her time. But racing was risky in any case, especially on the Missouri, for the temptation always existed to increase the pressure of steam above the safety limit. Of all the disasters that ever

occurred on the river the most terrible were those caused by boiler explosions.

The next most fatal cause of accidents on the Missouri, after snags and sunken wrecks, was fire. The cabins of the boats were constructed of white pine, as light as they could be built, and were thoroughly saturated with lead and oil. Constructed of such combustible material, when once on fire the flames could not be extinguished, and the vessel burned with such rapidity as often to cause the loss of life.

Accidents from explosions of boilers were frequent in the early days of steamboating on the river, and the fatality in some cases was appalling. The boat always caught fire after the explosion, and those who escaped immediate death were confronted by the flames. The improvement in the material and construction of the boilers, however, and the more rigid enforcement of the inspection laws, by the government, tended to materially decrease the number of disasters from this cause in the last years of steamboating.

THE EXPLOSION OF THE SALUDA.

The most terrible disaster that ever occurred on the Missouri river was that of the explosion of the *Saluda* at Lexington, Mo., in 1852. The *Saluda* was a side-wheel steamer with a battery of two boilers, and was on her way up the river with her cabin and lower deck crowded with passengers, the most of whom were Mormons. The river was unusually high and the current at that place exceedingly swift. Capt. Francis P. Belt, the commander of the boat, had made repeated efforts to stem the current, but having failed fell back to the levee. At last, on the morning of April

9th, after waiting several days for the flood to subside, he again ordered steam raised for a final effort. He went to the engine room, and looking up at the steamgauge, asked the engineer how much more pressure she could stand. On being answered that she had already every pound of steam that it was safe to carry, he said: "Fill her up. Put on more steam," and remarked to the engineer that he would "round the point or blow her to H—l." He then returned to the hurricane roof, rang the bell, and gave the order to "cast loose the line."

The bow of the boat swung gently out into the stream and was caught by the current. The engine made but one revolution; then came the terrible crash! and all was chaos, darkness and death. The number of those who lost their lives was never known. About one hundred bodies were recovered, and it was supposed that there were as many more victims whose bodies were blown into the river and never recovered. Nearly all of the officers of the boat were killed, among them Capt. Belt. He was at his post, on the hurricane roof, standing with his arm resting on the bell, when the explosion occurred, and was blown high up on the bank. His body, when found, was a mangled mass of flesh and bones. The bell, which had just sounded the death-knell of so many souls, was sold with the wreckage to an old German, who afterward sold it to the Christian church, at Savannah, Mo., where it has hung in the belfry for more than half a century. On any Sabbath morning its clear silvery peals can be heard, but it is doubtful if there is one among all those who are called to the house of God, who knows anything of its tragic history.

A partial list of boats wrecked on the Missouri river has been preserved, with the names of the captains and owners, the date and place where wrecked, the cause, and many other particulars. It contains the names of 300 boats, but is not complete, as no regular record was kept of the number. 193 were sunk by coming in contact with snags; 25 by fire, and the remainder by explosions, rocks, bridges, storms and ice. More than three-fourths of the number were wrecked between Kansas City and the mouth of the river, as most of the boats ran in the lower trade. In fact, that part of the river is a marine grave-yard, and there lie buried in the bends the wrecks of more than 200 steamboats, covered with the accumulated sands of half a century.

GAMBLING ON THE RIVER.

Marvelous tales of gambling on the river, in old times, have been told, and it is to be regretted that many of these stories have not been exaggerated. There were boats on which gambling was permitted, and it was not unusual for a professional gambler to travel on a boat and run his game openly and above-board. Indeed, there were certain boats on which it was said the captain or clerk "stood in" with the gambler, and shared his nefarious profits. I never saw a planter bet his negro servant on a game of cards—that is said to have occurred on the lower Mississippi—but I have witnessed scenes equally as pathetic and sad. I have seen men, after losing their last dollar, take their watches and jewelry and cast them into the jackpot. Poker was the game universally played on the river—big games they were, too—and the excitement ran high, as the passengers crowded around the table, in the cabin, on which the gold and silver were stacked up.

The steamer *John D. Perry* left St. Louis one evening, in July, 1858, with her cabin crowded with passengers. Among the number was an old gentleman—a farmer from a lower river county—who had gone down on the previous trip with his crop of hemp, which he had sold. The writer was clerk of the boat, and just as the lines were cast off the old gentleman came to the office and handed me a well-filled pocketbook, which he requested me to place in the safe. About 9 o'clock that night, after the boat had gotten several miles above the mouth of the Missouri, he came to the office again and requested me to return him his pocketbook. I did so; and being busily engaged at the time did not give the matter any further attention. It soon occurred to me, however, that it was strange that he should want his money at that time of night, and I walked back in the cabin to see what was going on. There I saw my old friend, sitting at a table, on which was stacked up a pile of money, playing poker with two men, who, from their appearance, I immediately suspected were professional gamblers.

We did not permit gambling on our boat, and our captain was violently opposed to it and utterly abhorred a professional gambler. I went at once to the hurricane roof, where I knew the "old man" was on watch, and informed him of what was going on below. He came down in a hurry, and walking back to the table, said, "This game must stop right here. You sports can't make a gambling house out of this boat. Mr. —," calling the old farmer by name, "get up from that table and take your money. These men are professional gamblers and are robbing you. Now," he said, turning to the other two men, "you fellows get your baggage and get ready to go ashore."

The gamblers first undertook to bluff the captain, and then began to beg, but it was all in vain; he was inexorable. It was a dark and stormy night and the rain was pouring down in torrents, but, notwithstanding the storm, the boat was landed alongside a dense forest and the two sporting gentlemen were made to walk a gang-plank. We shoved off and left them standing there in the dark woods, miles from any human habitation, and as the buckets of the wheels struck the water we could hear their curses, loud and bitter, as they swore eternal vengeance against the boat and her officers.

CHOLERA ON THE RIVER.

In the early days of steamboating, and even as late as the '50s, the cholera often became epidemic on the river and caused many deaths. In such cases, when a passenger died—especially a deck passenger who was generally an immigrant—the body of the unfortunate victim was hastily placed in a rude wooden box, the boat run alongshore, where a shallow grave was dug in which the body was hastily interred. There it remained, unmarked, until the shifting current of the river invaded the sacred spot and swept away all that was mortal of the unfortunate stranger, whose friends, perhaps, never knew his fate. There were many such graves along the river in olden times, and it was not unusual for a coffin to be seen protruding from the bank, where the current had encroached.

The rough wooden boxes used as coffins, were made by the boat's carpenter, who worked day and night in preparing them in advance of the death of the victims; so that when a death occurred there might be no delay in disposing of the body. On one occasion a boat was ascending the river with the cholera on board.

Death was stalking the decks, and one morning, among those who had died during the previous night, was a man of unusual height. No box was found of sufficient length to contain the body. What was to be done? The captain, whose name need not be mentioned, although he has been dead for more than forty years, called for an axe, and deliberately cut the man's legs off and laid them beside the body in the box, and thus the poor fellow was laid away in his hastily dug grave.

In the spring of 1849 the steamer *James Monroe* left St. Louis, bound for the Missouri river, crowded with people, who, for the most part, were Mormons en route for Salt Lake. On approaching Jefferson City the people of that town—such was the fear of the epidemic—forbade the boat landing, and to enforce their command planted an old cannon called the “Sacramento” on the bank of the river, and threatened to blow the boat out of the water if she attempted to touch the wharf. The boat stopped about a mile below town, and the poor unfortunate passengers, in their effort to escape from the plague-ridden vessel, came up the bank of the river, where many of their dead bodies were found. Finally, the compassion of the citizens overcame their fear, the churches were turned into improvised hospitals, and the best care possible was given those who had survived. Those of the unfortunate crew who escaped death, fled from the pestilence, and the ill-fated boat, after lying there for several months, was taken back to St. Louis.

The most unfortunate trip that was ever made by a steamboat up the river, and the most far-reaching in its results, and in the sacrifice of human life, was that of the *St. Peters*. She was a single engine boat, built by Pierre Choteau and Peter Sarpy for the

fur-trade. She left St. Louis in the spring of 1837, bound for the mountains, loaded with supplies for the different posts. Her deck-crew was composed of negroes, and before she arrived at St. Joseph, then called the "Blacksnake Hills," the smallpox had broken out among them, and, one, who had died, was buried there. The contagion immediately extended to other members of the crew, and the danger of communicating the disease to the Indians—who were then numerous along the river—became apparent. Runners were sent forward to give the alarm and warn the Indians to keep away from the banks; but notwithstanding this precaution the terrible contagion spread, and was communicated to every tribe east of the Rocky Mountains. The fatality—as the Indians knew no way to treat the disease—was appalling, and among some tribes amounted to annihilation. In the case of the Mandans, a tribe then seated near where Bismarck, Dakota, is now located, a population of 1,700 was reduced to 31. Among the Pawnees, who were then on the Platte, the death-rate was so great that according to the official report made to the government, they were reduced, within a year, from 12,500 to 6,244—one-half the tribe had died. Utter dismay pervaded all the tribes, and they fled from the pestilence, in every direction, leaving the bodies of their dead to be devoured by the wolves.*

HIGH WATER MARK REACHED.

The year 1858 may be taken as the year in which steamboating on the Missouri river reached the summit of its prosperity. There were then not less than 60 regular packets on the river, besides perhaps 30 or 40 transient boats, called "tramps," which came

*Reference has heretofore been made to this epidemic of 1837.

into the river from other streams and made one or two trips during the season. Packet lines were established to Miami, Kansas City, St. Joseph, Omaha, and even to Sioux City. They carried the United States mail and express freight, and the semi-weekly or daily arrival of the regular packet was looked forward to with the same degree of certainty as we now look forward to the arrival of a railroad train. So numerous were the boats on the lower river, during this period, that it was no unusual sight to see as many as five or six lying at a landing at the same time, and at no time was a boat out of sight during the boating season, which continued from March till November. The prosperity which this great traffic brought to the river towns was phenomenal, and the population of many of them was greater fifty years ago than it is today.

The usual life of a steamboat, barring accidents, was from eight to ten years, and she was expected to make money from the first turn of her wheel. If she did not she was considered a failure, for the depreciation was estimated at ten per cent the first year, and twenty-five per cent each year thereafter. There were many boats in the regular trade which paid back their cost the first year, and at the end of the second year, at furthest, they were expected to show a clean balance sheet. Steamboating was a hazardous business and one attended with great risk, both to life and property, but the profits, with the rates of freight from fifty cents to one dollar per hundred pounds, and passage from St. Louis to Kansas City \$25, were commensurate with the risk. No insurance could ever be obtained against explosions, and the hull risk was from 12 to 15 cents per hundred.

But the business of steamboating, notwithstanding all its draw-

backs, was both profitable and pleasant, and there was a fascination about it which prevented those who had once followed the river ever becoming exactly satisfied on shore. The continual change of scenery, the panoramic views of forests and farm houses, the meeting with interesting people, and above all the social feature of steamboating, rendered the avocation a pleasant one. The most pathetic feature connected with steamboating on the Missouri river was the tenacity with which the old steamboatman clung to the river. He seemed never to be able to realize the changed condition in the method of transportation which came, but continued the unequal contest with the new method, hoping for the return of the good old days, until the fortune he had acquired was lost. There were but few instances in which they did not die poor.

It cannot be expected that in so brief a paper the names of all the steamboats that navigated the river in its palmy days can be given, but among the finest and most popular which were on the river in 1858—the banner year—were the following—“*Kate Howard*,” “*John D. Perry*,” “*David Tatum*,” “*Silver Heels*,” “*Clara*,” “*Kate Swinney*,” “*B. W. Lewis*,” “*Platte Valley*,” “*Asa Wilgus*,” “*Alonzo Child*,” “*Australia*,” “*F. X. Aubrey*,” “*Admiral*,” “*D. S. Carter*,” “*Eclipse*,” “*Emigrant*,” “*E. A. Ogden*,” “*Empire State*,” “*Hesperian*,” “*Isabella*,” “*Jas. H. Lucas*,” “*New Lucy*,” “*Jenny Lewis*,” “*Meteor*,” “*Minnehaha*,” “*Polar Star*,” “*Peerless*,” “*Spread Eagle*,” “*War Eagle*,” “*South Western*,” “*C. W. Sombart*,” “*Tropic*,” “*Twilight*,” “*Thomas E. Tutt*,” “*White Cloud*,” and “*Edinburg*.”

Among those which came later, and which were built for some special trade, were the “*R. W. Dugan*,” “*E. H. Durfee*,” “*Phil E.*

Chappell," "Montana," "Dakota," "A. L. Mason," "State of Missouri," and "State of Kansas." Some of these ran as late as 1888. They were the last boats built for the Missouri river.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

But steamboating on the Missouri river is dead. Like the cowboy and the prairie schooner, the steamboat is a thing of the past. The whistle of the first locomotive, as it reverberated through the Blacksnake Hills, on the completion of the Hannibal and St. Joseph railroad to the Missouri river at St. Joseph, in 1859, sounded the death-knell of steamboating on that stream. It was the beginning of the end. Steamboating began in 1819. At the end of twenty years it had grown to large proportions and continued to grow for the succeeding twenty years. Then it began to die and in another twenty years was dead. As the different railroads penetrated the interior, touching the different points on the great water-course, its commerce began to wither and die, and it became evident, to those who watched the trend of events, that river transportation could not compete successfully with the cheaper and more rapid method.

Then came the war of 1861, causing the loss of many boats, driving others out of the river, and from the presence of the guerilla rendering navigation even more hazardous than it had been. A few boats remained, but even they, for the most part, went higher up the river to escape competition with the railroads, and ran between Sioux City and Ft. Benton.

THE LAST STAND.

It was during this period (1862) that gold was discovered in Montana, and, as is usual in such discoveries, a great rush of population began to flow into that country. As the only means of transportation was by way of the Missouri river, this unexpected demand for transportation caused a wonderful revival in steamboating. There were but few regular boats on the Missouri, at that time, but others began to crowd in from every stream west of the Alleghenies—sidewheelers, sternwheelers, and old tubs. The voyage to Fort Benton, the nearest point to the mines, was 2,200 miles; and it was beset with danger, both in the navigation and from the Indians.

This trade, which was of short duration, proved to be exceedingly profitable, as the rates demanded and paid were exorbitant. The usual rate on freight was from ten to fifteen cents per pound, and a first class passage to Fort Benton cost \$300. Enormous profits were made by some of the boats. On one trip the "*St. John*" cleared \$17,000, the "*Laconia*" \$16,000 and the "*Octavia*" \$40,000. The "*W. J. Lewis*," a new boat, built in 1865, went to Fort Benton in 1866, and when she returned to St. Louis, after an absence of 60 days, had cleared her cost, which was \$60,000. The "*Peter Balen*," an old tub, not worth over \$15,000, but a good carrier, made a profit of \$80,000 on one trip.*

But this rich harvest only continued ten years, for like a Nemesis the railroad pursued the steamboat. In 1872 the Northern

*The writer has in his possession a list of more than 600 steamboats that navigated the Missouri river. It is not complete, as it probably does not contain half the names, but it is perhaps the most complete list that has been preserved.

Pacific railroad reached Bismarck, and for a second time the steamboat was forced to surrender to its invincible enemy. It was the last stand of the steamboat, on the Missouri river, in its battle with the railroad.

There is not today a single steamboat engaged in navigating the Missouri river. All are gone. The glory of the past is gone. The evolution is complete. The Indian canoe, the *perogue*, the *batteau*, the keelboat, the mackinaw boat, the steamboat, have all passed away, and there now remains, on what was once the great commercial thoroughfare of the West, only the original navigator—the little blue-winged teal duck. The recollection of steamboating on the Missouri river, is, to the old steamboatman, but a pleasant dream of the past.

